

Israeli warplanes attack guerrilla hideouts in south Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — Israeli warplanes fired rockets at suspected resistance hideouts in three air raids Monday around the wooded hills of Ein Al Tineh in south Lebanon, security officials said. The air attacks appeared to be prompted by the claim of the Shiite Muslim militia Hizbollah that its guerrillas ambushed Israeli commandos advancing in the area, "scoring direct hits and inflicting casualties." Ein Al Tineh is three kilometres from the Israeli-occupied zone in south Lebanon set up in 1985 to protect northern Israel from guerrilla attacks. Along with Monday's first raid by two jets at 3:30 p.m. local time, Israeli gunners fired 25 artillery shells on the targeted area, said the Lebanese security officials, speaking on the customary condition of anonymity.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
الزمانة الأردنية السياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرأي



Volume 24 Number 6985

AMMAN TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1998, RAJAB 14, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Jordan does not prohibit criticism of Wye accord, but would not tolerate inciting violence, terrorism — Judeh

By Francesca Ciriaci and Alia A. Toukan

AMMAN — In response to allegations that Jordan is silencing opposition to the recent Palestinian-Israeli Wye Plantation peace deal, the government on Monday said it has not prohibited Hamas or other groups from criticising the accord. But it reiterated that it would not tolerate statements inciting violence or terrorism against any party.

"What we are talking about is using Jordan as a base to make statements that incite acts (of) terrorism," Minister of Information Nasser Judeh said in a regular press briefing.

Judeh's statements came a day after a rally, organised by the Muslim Brotherhood, slammed the Wye peace deal as a "sell-out" of the Palestinians, and

accused the government of silencing opposition to the accord.

Stressing that Hamas has no base or leadership in Jordan and that the movement was not ordered to halt criticism of the peace deal, Judeh said that Sunday's rally was within the confines of freedom of speech.

"There is no leadership of Hamas in Jordan. There are Jordanian citizens who are ideologically or politically affiliated with Hamas or others," said Judeh, adding that criticism and freedom of speech are welcomed and respected by the government.

But at Sunday's rally, attended by over 800 supporters, the Brotherhood's overall leader Abdul Majeed Thneibat, insisted that "the deal forces all Arab countries to silence the Islamic debate...and to

eliminate whatever is left of Palestinian resistance."

Speaking at the rally, Hamas spokesperson Ibrahim Ghosheh pledged that the movement will keep its promise made to God to fight the Zionist enemy "no matter how many difficulties we will face or how many of our people will be arrested."

Earlier this week, the government warned Hamas leaders in Amman against issuing statements inciting violence or obstructing the peace deal, which calls for a gradual Israeli troop withdrawal from 13.1 per cent of the West Bank, in return for full Palestinian security concessions including a crackdown on Hamas.

The government warning came in the wake of Thursday's bomb attack on an Israeli school bus in the Gaza Strip, claimed by the

Islamic resistance movement, and a string of statements made last week by Hamas' politburo chief Khaled Misha'al in Amman, condemning the peace deal and vowing that Hamas will continue to wage war against the Jewish state.

The Islamic-led opposition, including the Brotherhood's political arm, the Islamic Action Front, has rejected the Oct. 23 peace deal as "a threat not only to the Palestinian people, but also to Jordan and all Arab countries."

Warning the government against what they described as the shackling of freedom of speech, the Brotherhood urged both the PNA and Hamas to avoid a civil war, calling on "all Palestinians to stand united as one nation before the Zionist threat."

Leftists, Islamists, and

some former officials have warned that by further straining already troubled PNA-Hamas relations, the Wye agreement could lead to a civil war in Palestine.

Following the signing of the agreement the PNA has jailed tens of suspect Hamas militants, put the movement's spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin under house arrest, and is now reported to be hunting a top military leader.

Ghosheh told the rally, also attended by professional union leaders, heads of opposition parties, and popular opposition figures, that the movement will fight "against Israel, and only Israel."

Ghosheh added that around 1,000 Hamas members have been arrested in the past few days by Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, welcomes Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helvig Petersen on his arrival at the Royal Court on Monday (Reuters photo)

At meetings with Danish, Spanish ministers: Regent underlines need to enhance Euro-Jordanian ties

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian-European relations, the European role in the Middle East and the latest developments in the peace process were the main issues that HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, discussed Monday at meetings with Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helvig Petersen and Spanish Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and the European Union Affairs Ramon de Miguel.

The Regent reaffirmed the necessity of developing Jordanian-European ties, especially the Jordanian-European Association in the economic, cultural and political fields.

The Regent discussed with the Danish and Spanish ministers means for promoting and strengthening cooperation between Jordan on the one hand and Denmark and Spain on the other particularly in the economic fields.

During the meeting, Prince Hassan underlined the importance of the European role in the peace process as complementing to the U.S. role.

Prince Hassan stressed the need for pooling efforts of all sides for the sake of giving impetus to the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace guaranteeing all parties' rights.

Referring to the Palestin-

ian-Israeli agreement reached at Wye River last week, the Regent said that the accord constituted a positive step which requires continued backing and commitment for its implementation.

The two ministers voiced their countries' appreciation of the role that was played by His Majesty King Hussein in helping the concerned parties to reach the agreement and Jordan's role in building peace and stability in the region.

The Danish minister conveyed to the Regent greetings from Queen Margrethe and the Danish prime minister to the King and the Regent expressing wishes for the King's speedy recovery.

The Spanish minister conveyed King Juan Carlos' wishes to the King and the Regent.

The Regent hosted a lunch in honour of the two European ministers and their delegations attended by Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Speaker of the Senate Zeid Rifai and other officials.

Tarawneh also met the Danish minister and discussed with him bilateral ties and the Middle East issue and the recent accord in Washington between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Following the meeting the Danish minister said that Danish-Jordanian relations

will witness further improvement in the near future adding that he will report to his European colleagues on the outcome of his Middle East visit and the important role Jordan is playing towards the establishment of peace and security in the region.

Earlier the Danish foreign minister met his Jordanian counterpart Abdul Ilah Al Khatib and reviewed the role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and Denmark's contributions along with the other donor nations to the agency.

The two sides reviewed Jordan's services to the Palestinian refugees stressing the need for UNRWA to pursue its role until a solution is found to the Palestinian refugee problem guaranteeing their legitimate rights. They also voiced their support for the agency and its vital role.

Khanb and Petersen voiced backing for the Wye River accord and stressed the importance of its implementation in accordance with the timetable provided in that accord.

The Danish minister left Amman later Monday for a visit to the Palestine self-rule areas after winding up his two-day visit to the Kingdom.

U.S. weighs options in response to Iraq Iraqi National Assembly seeks Arab support

Agencies

U.S. President Bill Clinton warned Monday that Baghdad's decision to bar U.N. inspectors from all weapons sites will backfire against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, who could face military action.

"Saddam Hussein's latest refusal to cooperate with the international weapons inspectors is completely unacceptable," Clinton said during a White House ceremony.

Earlier, Clinton met with his security team for a second day to review developments following Iraq's announcement Saturday that it would bar arms inspectors from the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) at all sites.

The president said his advisors had discussed next steps for dealing with the crisis and they agreed that until the arms experts are "back on the job, no options are off the table."

The U.N. Security Council has demanded Iraq reverse "immediately and unconditionally" its decision and

Clinton noted that Baghdad's move had galvanised international support for a firm stand.

"Once again," Clinton said, "it will backfire."

"Far from dividing the international community and achieving concessions, his obstruction...has only served to deepen the international community's resolve."

Clinton is sending Defence Secretary William Cohen, who cut short an Asian tour to cope with the crisis, abroad to consult with U.S. allies. White House spokesman Joe Lockhart said.

In Baghdad, the parliament on Monday expressed support for Iraq's break with UNSCOM. The 250-member National Assembly announced at an emergency session that it "forcefully backed the Iraqi leadership's decision to end all cooperation with UNSCOM and its chief and halt its activities in Iraq."

MPs also called on other Arab parliaments to support Iraq's position "in the face of the genocidal policies of the American administration,"

referring to Washington's hard line against a lifting of U.N. sanctions.

But Britain threatened President Saddam with military action if he refused to back down on Saturday's decision to break with the UNSCOM on disarmament until it is restructured and its chief Richard Butler sacked.

"If the use of force is necessary, then that's the course which should be taken," a Downing Street spokesman said as Prime Minister Tony Blair met officials to discuss Iraq's move.

Defence Secretary George Robertson said the international force put together at the time of the last confrontation with Saddam in early 1998 when he expelled U.S. arms inspectors remained in place.

"He must obey the will of the international community and the U.N. or face the consequences," Robertson said. "If he seems hell-bent on confrontation with the U.N., the international community will stand up to him in the same way as it did then."

(Continued on page 3)

Jordan urges restraint

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The government on Monday urged Iraq and the U.S. not to escalate their dispute over the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) activities in Iraq following Baghdad's decision to suspend cooperation with U.N. inspectors.

Speaking to reporters at his weekly news briefing, Minister of Information Nasser Judeh called for an end to the eight-year-old sanctions imposed on Iraq following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Judeh urged Baghdad and Washington to resort to "reason and logic" to settle their differences over the U.N. inspection of Iraq's mass destruction weapons.

Judeh's statement came two days after Iraq said it will not cooperate with U.N. teams in Baghdad and called for the replacement of UNSCOM's Chairman Richard Butler.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz said on Sunday that Iraq's decision was "irreversible" even if it led to military confrontation with the U.S.

The U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen cut short an Asian tour and headed back to Washington for discussion on the situation. Cohen said that the U.S. has all options, including military strikes, open to deal with the new development.

"We hope that there will be no escalation from both sides and we hope that they will be committed to international legitimacy to get out of the dark tunnel," Judeh said.

"We hope that the suffering of the Iraqi people in all its forms be ended," the minister said. "The Iraqi people has suffered a great deal and it is time to end all this," the minister said.

Israel delays application of peace deal; Arafat hands over terror plan



OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel dealt another blow to the Wye River peace deal on Monday by delaying its implementation at least 10 days, while the Palestinians fulfilled a key condition of the accord.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu telephoned Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to explain the decision and the Palestinian leader agreed to the delay, to give the Israeli parliament time to ratify the deal, senior Arafat advisor Ahmad Tibi said.

"Arafat agreed to hold up the implementation a few days as long as the Israeli government committed itself not to delay it longer," Tibi said.

For their part the Palestinians said they were determined to stick to their side of the timetable despite the Israeli postponement.

"We will stick to our side of the agreement completely because we are not willing to give the Israelis an excuse not to implement the agreement,"

a Palestinian official told AFP.

And U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said in Washington that a Palestinian counter-terrorism plan had been transmitted to U.S. officials according to the timetable in the Wye River accord.

"The plan is ready and we discussed it with the Americans and the Israelis," Arafat said after a meeting in Ramallah with Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helvig Petersen.

The Wye River agreement, which requires Israel to cede more West Bank land and take other steps to expand Palestinian autonomy in exchange for anti-terror actions, was signed in Washington on October 23 and had been due to take effect Monday.

In a radio interview, Netanyahu said Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein ruled that the agreement was not valid without ratification by both the cabinet and the Knesset, which is scheduled to debate the deal Nov. 11 and 12.

"I am hoping to find a way

not to postpone the original timetable and to stick to it as soon as possible," Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu had already delayed a cabinet vote on the agreement from last week until Tuesday to be sure the Palestinians would honour a commitment to submit a counter-terrorism plan to the United States by Monday.

Arafat obtained his cabinet's approval of Wye River on Friday and his police have in recent days arrested hundreds of militants from the main anti-Israel militant group, Hamas, in a crackdown required by the accord.

Since it was signed, the deal has suffered a series of blows, including two deadly attacks on Jewish settlers by Hamas and other militants opposed to peace with Israel.

U.S. embassy spokesman Larry Schwartz expressed disappointment with the Israeli delay, saying the U.S. position had been that "the parties are obliged to implement the Wye

River memorandum beginning today."

In private, other U.S. officials were more candid, noting that Netanyahu could have factored the need for ratification in the agreement when it was negotiated or obtained the necessary approval during the 10-day hiatus between the accord's signature and scheduled application.

"He had plenty of time to do this last week, but didn't," said one official who asked not to be named.

The official added, however, that under the terms of the accord, Israel's first concrete obligation — to begin transferring an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian control — is not due until the end of next week and so will not necessarily be affected by the delay.

"As of today, they are only required to participate in meetings and our understanding is that those are continuing," he said.

'Jordan's ties with Syria on the mend'

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan indicated that fractured relations with neighbouring Syria are on the mend, although Egypt's role in dousing a fiery war of words that began in early October remains vague.

Minister of Information Nasser Judeh yesterday responded to a question as to whether or not Egypt had stepped in to calm tensions between Amman and Damascus by saying that recent statements by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had been "very clear."

Following a visit to Egypt by Syrian President Hafez Al Assad Saturday to discuss the Middle East peace process, Mubarak told journalists that "[Egypt] is talking to Syria and Jordan as brothers, and [Egypt] hopes that their differences can be reconciled."

Their differences are few and the two countries are solving their problems among themselves."

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa last week visited Amman, offering Egyptian diplomacy to defuse tensions between Jordan and Syria and improve "the general Arab atmosphere."

"[Jordan] will spare no effort to improve matters [with Syria]," Judeh told journalists during a weekly press briefing. "Relations should be restored, as they ought to be between neighbouring countries. But we would like to see a lessening of the media campaign."

Syria, on the verge of a military clash with Turkey in early October, provoked Amman with accusations made by Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass that

(Continued on page 12)

Settlers to get 50% funding increase in budget — Peace Now

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's draft 1999 budget contains provisions for 50 per cent rise in funding to Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, the anti-settlement movement Peace Now said Monday.

"I am appalled by the new outrageous allocation of funds in the proposed government budget to the most extreme settlers who reject any peace agreement with the Palestinians," Peace Now Director Mossi Raz said.

Peace Now calculated that the total budget allocated by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to settlers is 1.5 billion shekels (about \$350 million). "It is shameful and we cannot allow the 1999 budget to pass through the Knesset

[Israeli parliament]," Raz told AFP.

The Knesset was scheduled to vote late Monday on the first reading of the budget. Three readings are scheduled before the budget comes into force, with a final vote expected in December.

Raz said he had protested to Netanyahu in a letter which also outlined a 318 per cent increase in by-pass road funding to \$8 million and allocation of agriculture ministry funds to projects that appeared to have little to do with farming.

"The ministry of agriculture has allocated funds for the construction of a new yeshiva [Jewish religious school for men] in a settlement near Hebron, a swimming pool in another set-

dlement, a beit midrash [school for Jewish studies] in another," the letter said.

It also said a 100 per cent funding increase was planned for private firms to provide security for settlers in Arab east Jerusalem.

Raz said the settler funds could be used to subsidise the education of 150,000 students who are striking for a reduction in university fees.

All Israeli higher education institutions have been closed since students launched highly visible protests over higher education fees two weeks ago. Dozens of students were arrested early Monday for disrupting public order.

The prime minister's office declined to comment on Peace Now's letter.



TURKISH COMEDIAN TO GO ON HUNGER STRIKE: Turkish impersonator and satirist Levent Kirca (L) and a fellow actress Oya Basar (R) are raised on shoulders by fans Monday following Kirca's visit to the parliamentary speaker in Ankara. Comedian Kirca said he would go on a hunger strike on Tuesday in protest at a TV watchdog's 'censorship' of a channel that broadcast an episode of his show. Kirca's stand against the powerful High Council of Radio and Television has won support from the public and from within the broadcasting industry (Reuters photo)

Eleven dead in Algerian violence

ALGIERS (AFP) — Eleven people, mainly armed Islamists but also civilians, lost their lives in weekend violence in Algeria, press reports said Monday.

Eight armed Islamists were killed in two operations by security forces in the north-western town of Sidi Bel Abbas, L'Authentique reported, without saying when the operations took place.

Four of them, wearing Afghan dress, were killed at a farm on the outskirts of the town where they had gone to look for clothes so that they could enter the town unrecognised.

Security forces, on a tip-off by the owner, killed them after a brief clash.

Four other Islamists were killed in a second clash, L'Authentique reported.

A farmer was killed and two others were injured on Saturday when a bomb exploded in a greenhouse in Jacma, near Tipaza, 70 kilometres west of Algiers.

A policeman was killed Friday in Timizart, near the northeastern city of Tizi-Ouzou, La Nouvelle Republique reported. One of his attackers was fatally wounded as the officer tried to defend himself, and later died.

Two brothers driving between Bouhrou and Tameskal near the north-western city of Tiemcen were injured Saturday in a bomb explosion, L'Authentique reported.

Since the start of the month, several dozen people have been killed in ongoing violence.

Islamists have been fighting to overthrow Algeria's government since 1992, following the cancellation of the second round of elections that the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Egyptian police kill two suspected Islamists

MINYA (AFP) — Police killed two suspected members of the outlawed Gamaa Islamiya group in a raid on a hideout in southern Egypt on Monday, in the first such incident since July, police said. The pair were killed in a clash in the Mallawi region of Minya province, where security forces stormed a hideout where suspected Islamists were believed to be holed up, they said. Two policemen were wounded in the shootout, police said. It was the first clash between security forces and Islamists in Egypt since July.

State of emergency in west Sudan

KHARTOUM (AFP) — President Omar Bashir has declared a state of emergency in three states in western and central Sudan in a bid to curb armed robbery, a presidential adviser said Monday. Abdul Basit Sabdarat, Bashir's adviser for legal and political affairs, told the SUNA news agency that the president decreed the state of emergency on Monday covering the states of Kordofan and Northern and Southern Darfur. He said the decree would be introduced to the national assembly for debate on Tuesday.

'Khatami to visit France in February'

PARIS (AP) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami is to visit France in February, his first official trip to a European country, Iran's ambassador was quoted Monday as saying in an interview with the newspaper Le Monde. Khatami places special importance on Iran's relations with Paris, and has put invitations from other European nations on hold until he first visits France, Ambassador Ali Reza Moayeri was quoted by Le Monde as saying. No exact date for the visit was provided by the daily.

Algeria condemns Burkina Faso

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria on Monday condemned Burkina Faso for allowing entry to Islamist Ahmad Zaidi, expelled from Switzerland last week as a "security risk". Foreign ministry spokesman Abdul Aziz Sebba said: "At a time when the international community is mobilising itself against terrorism and when Africa itself is the target of this scourge, it is not acceptable that an African country, especially the president of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), welcomes on its territory the leader of a terrorist group."

Iranian FM to visit Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi is due to visit Saudi Arabia on Friday or Saturday to attend a session of the two countries' joint commission, an official said Monday. Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Sadr told the Tehran Times that the commission was formed in May during a visit here by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal.

Mubarak says Syria ready for talks with Israel

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak

said on Sunday Israel needs to create the right atmosphere before peace talks with Syria can resume.

"Syria is ready to resume peace talks with Israel from the point where they left off," Mubarak said in televised remarks after talks with visiting Syrian President Hafez Assad in the Red Sea resort

of Sharm Al Sheikh.

"The Syrians no longer have trust in the Israelis," Mubarak said. "The issue is that there is no confidence. It is important that Israel creates the right atmosphere so that they can trust Israeli actions. Otherwise things would be difficult."

Mubarak, whose country was the first Arab state to sign a peace agreement with

Israel in 1979, said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had rejected Syria's offer to resume negotiations from where they left off.

The peace talks between Israel and Syria, which opened in Madrid in 1991, broke off in early 1996 without progress on the fate of the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in 1967.

"The current [Israeli] prime minister asserts that talks should start from the beginning which is point zero. This is what Syria turns down," Egyptian TV said talks between Mubarak and Assad covered Middle East peace efforts, Syrian-Turkish relations and bilateral ties.

Assad left for Damascus without talking to reporters. It was Assad's third trip to

Egypt this year.

Assad and Mubarak last met in Damascus in early October, when Mubarak mediated in a row between Syria and Turkey over Ankara's allegations that Syria supported Kurdish rebels seeking self-rule in southeast Turkey. Syria denied the charge.

Turkey and Syria said later that they resolved the row.

Palestinians strike to protest Wye River deal

SIDON (AP) — Palestinians burned Israeli and American flags at Lebanon's largest refugee camp Monday to protest the U.S.-brokered peace accord with Israel.

Carrying Palestinian flags and chanting anti-Israeli slogans, they marched at the teen-age refugee camp of Ain Al Hilweh on the outskirts of the port city of Sidon in southern Lebanon.

They set fire to car tyres at

one of the entrances to the camp, home to 70,000 people and the largest of Lebanon's 13 refugee camps.

Schools, shops and businesses at the camp were closed briefly to observe a strike called by a coalition of radical Palestinian factions. A statement from the groups said the action was meant "to condemn the Wye Plantation agreement" signed in Washington.

The coalition is made up of

factions such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which oppose Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's 1993 peace accords with Israel. Supporters of Arafat's mainstream Fatah faction at Ain Al Hilweh did not join the strike.

In the Lebanese capital, Beirut, about 200 Palestinians marched at the Shatila refugee camp, carrying pamphlets say-

ing, "No to Arafat, No to Netanyahu and No to Wye Plantation agreement."

The Wye Plantation accord was signed in Oct. 23 by Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It calls for an Israeli withdrawal from an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank in exchange for a Palestinian security crackdown on Islamists.

Many Arabs and Palestinians have criticised the deal as a sell-

out. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are fearful Arafat's peace will not lead to their return to their old villages, many now in Israel, or get them to Palestinian-controlled territory.

Similar protests against the Wye accord were held at refugee camps in northern and eastern regions of Lebanon. There are some 350,000 Palestinians living in the country's 13 refugee camps.

Mbeki holds major arms talks in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (AFP) — South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki met Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz in Riyadh on Monday as part of discussions that will include a major arms deal, diplomatic sources said.

Diplomats said the talks would include negotiations over an arms deal worth an estimated \$1.5 billion for the sale to Saudi Arabia of G-6

supercannons and anti-aircraft missiles.

Mbeki's trip comes one year after a visit to Saudi Arabia by South African President Nelson Mandela and the signing of a letter of intent to develop cooperation between the two countries' oil sectors.

South Africa's ministers of defence, Joe Modise, and mineral and energy, Penuell Maduna, and their Saudi

counterparts were also at the meeting with the crown prince, the official SPA news agency said.

The talks followed a similar meeting with King Fahd on Sunday.

Mbeki arrived Sunday for the four days of meetings with Saudi officials and the secretary general of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jamil Al Hujailan.

Sudanese employees threaten strike

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Employees of Sudan's post service have threatened to strike in solidarity with dismissed colleagues, while teachers in North Kordofan have warned of a work stoppage over pay delays.

The 1,200 employees of the national post and telegraph authority said they will strike next week if the ministry of roads and communications failed to grant 200 dismissed colleagues their full post-service rights, Al Rai Al Ram daily reported Monday.

The ministry, ahead of a plan for privatisation of the post and telegraph authority, has sacked the 200 employees, regarding them as a surplus in manpower.

The authority's trade union said this has confiscated the legal rights of the dismissed and demanded that the ministry, instead, cancel the jobs as is usually followed in cases of privatisation.

The Sudan Workers Trade Unions Federation

(SWTUF) has already shown solidarity with the fired employees and threatened to take measures, including a strike, if the roads and communications ministry does not meet their demands by Saturday.

SWTUF President Taj Alsir Abdoun, however, said the manpower ministry is making ceaseless efforts to settle the crisis between the minister of roads and communications, Al Hadi Bushra, and the post and telegraph trade union.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 French Cartoon
15:30 Bananas in Pyjamas
16:00 Life Choices
16:30 Small Talk
17:00 Doc. - The Lions of Kalbari
18:00 French Programmes
..... Les Coeurs Brules
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme - Fractales
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Step by Step
20:00 What Would You Do?
20:30 Drover's Gold
21:05 You and your Car
21:30 UN Cut
22:00 News in English
22:30 Lonesome Dove
23:59 Feature film - The Falcon and the Snowman
01:30 End of T.N.

PRAYER TIMES

04:31 Fajr
05:49 (Sunrise) Duha
11:19 Dhuhur
14:22 'Asr
16:49 Maghreb
18:08 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefield, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624853/4624811
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church
Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweif
field Tel. 5920146
The Uniate Catholic Church
Tel. 4624757
The English Language
Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel.
4892679
The Baptist Church Tel.
4628052
The Armenian Catholic
Church Tel. 4771331
The American Orthodox
Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Moderate weather conditions will prevail with temperatures rising slightly, clouds appearing at low altitudes, and winds westerly moderate. Temperatures are expected to rise gradually over the coming days. In Aqaba, it will be moderate, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman 13/26
Aqaba 17/31
Deserts 11/28
Jordan Valley 18/32

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 24, Aqaba 29 Humidity readings: Amman 34 per cent, Aqaba 43 per cent.

Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 19
Jerash 27
Um Qays 26
Madaba 24
Petra 24
Dead Sea 33

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zaidieh 4126011
Dr. Khalid Asfour 5332600

Dr. Awad Hawasneh 5332350
Dr. Thaqib Qub'ala 4623029
Al Assema pharmacy 4637055
Al Salam pharmacy 4636730
Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660
Nairoudh pharmacy 4623672

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Tammeh (02) 20080
Al Quds pharmacy (---)

ZARQA:

Dr. Akram Haddad (09) 985550
Khalifeh pharmacy (09) 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343302
Traffic Police 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53300
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53300

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic Abdi 5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre 5856856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4642481/6
Akileh Maternity 4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Mushar Hospital 5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4771013
Al-Bashir 4775111/26
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Arenal Hospital 5674155

HOSPITALS

ZARQA:
Govt. Hospital
Zarqa (09) 983323
Zarqa National Hospital
..... (09) 900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09) 986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital
..... (09) 990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
..... (02) 275555
Roman Catholic Hospital
..... (02) 272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital
..... (02) 7101372, (02) 7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital
..... (02) 7102831,
(02) 7102011
Speciality Hospital (02) 7103100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03) 2040111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44) 53300-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:50 Dhahran (RJ)
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)
07:25 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Doha (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 London, Frankfurt (RJ)
17:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
23:10 Beirut (RJ)

Other Flights

12:30 Aden (TY)
14:35 Istanbul (TK)
18:00 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
18:45 Kiev (GU)
19:05 Paris (AF)
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
22:25 London, Damascus (BA)
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)
23:55 Larnaca (CY)
00:55 Bucharest (RO)
02:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

10:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
11:15 Aqaba (arriving at Marka

Airport) (RW)
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
19:20 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
23:25 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:50 Berlin, Brussels (RJ)
11:05 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
19:35 Beirut (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
20:45 Damascus (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights

07:10 Frankfurt (LH)
13:30 Aden (TY)
15:35 Istanbul (TK)
19:00 Dubai (EK)
19:40 Kiev (GU)
20:00 Beirut (ME)
21:10 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)
00:25 Amsterdam (KL)
01:55 Bucharest (RO)
03:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
08:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
17:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka



HRH Prince Faisal delivers an address at the aviation conference yesterday (Petra photo)

Prince Faisal calls on regional airlines to meet globalisation's challenges

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Market liberalisation, deregulation and new avenues for the air transport industry in the Middle East were the topics of discussion at an aviation conference that started here yesterday.

His Royal Highness Prince Faisal, in his opening remarks called on governments in the Middle East and their national airlines to face up to globalisation by acknowledging the changes affecting the air transport industry and looking for ways to adapt to new realities.

"The Middle East will face increasing pressure to deregulate its air transport in line with the rest of the world. The Middle East, therefore faces a couple of choices, either to do nothing and resist change until it is too late, or to embrace the liberalisation process and have some control over its implementation and the pace of liberalisation. The second [choice] seems to be

more logical and practical," Prince Faisal, who inaugurated the two-day conference organised by the Middle East Aviation Journal in conjunction with Royal Jordanian, said.

"Internationally, there are a number of trends that are challenging and changing the air transport industry. These factors include a trend towards liberalisation of the old regulatory regimes, a globalisation of markets, and a trend to privatise national airlines."

However, the Prince stressed the importance of the time factor in changing policies and on liberalisation.

"Airlines, agencies and governments should make every effort to adapt to open competition as early as possible to ensure the survival and long-term viability and profitability of the national airline," he warned.

Participants from Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates as well as representatives of international airlines agreed

that liberalisation improves efficiency and productivity and leads to lower prices, all of which benefit consumers.

Abed Quntar, managing director of Royal Wings, told the Jordan Times that the "aviation industry in Jordan is heading towards deregulation and liberalisation, and accordingly, Royal Jordanian is now being restructured, which will lead soon to privatisation."

Quntar added that most Arab countries are reluctant to open their skies, resorting instead to protectionism, which he said negatively affects the growth of aviation in the region.

Prince Faisal said that if a number of states in the region could liberalise their aviation policies, as the European Union did, that could result in mechanism to unify a liberalisation programme in the Middle East.

The first phase of liberalisation should aim at liberalising regional carriers and "lifting capacity, fares and

route restrictions for aircraft operating with 70 seats or less," he said.

"Smaller regional aircraft would be capable of offering better scheduling, develop point-to-point traffic with more frequent flights, while also serving secondary routes which are not being adequately served today," he added.

Kamal Shah, Middle East Aviation Journal's director of corporate affairs, said a policy of liberalisation will lead to development of regional services.

"Regional airlines are major players in the aviation sector and have their role to play, either as a feeder for major carriers or as provider of point-to-point services for small- and medium-sized communities."

"Regional airlines can also work to develop secondary hubs within a nation by providing services to hubs that are too small to be exploited by national carriers," Prince Faisal said.

Ministerial committee plans events to mark King's birthday

Meeting planned to examine reinstating national service

AMMAN (J.T.) — A ministerial committee charged with organising celebrations to mark His Majesty King Hussein's birthday Monday decided on a number of activities to be held in the country's governorates.

In a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh, the committee decided to hold the main celebration at the Palace of Culture at Al Hussein Sports City on Nov. 14, the King's birthday, in cooperation with the Armed Forces' brass band, as well as processions in the streets of Amman and fireworks displays in a number of the capital's districts.

The celebrations will also include folklore and aerial performances and the inauguration of a number of projects.

The committee formed

sub-committees to organise activities in other governorates and cities.

The ministerial committee comprises the ministers of labour, awqaf and Islamic affairs, culture and youth, social development, tourism, information, and education as well as Amman Mayor Nidal Hadid and Bilal Tal, an advisor at the Prime Ministry.

Unemployment committee holds meeting

On Sunday, Tarawneh chaired the first meeting of a higher ministerial committee on combating unemployment during which the general outline of a national strategy adopted at a recent conference on unemployment was reviewed.

Tarawneh urged the committee members, grouping

eight ministers and representatives of concerned departments, to work towards developing practical plans to deal with the poverty and unemployment issues.

The prime minister requested that the Ministry of Administrative Development and representatives of the Jordan Armed Forces hold a meeting as soon as possible to discuss the prospects of executing a proposed plan to reinstate national service.

The Ministry of Administrative Development has suggested that youths do voluntary national service with civic institutions, and the committee has been directed to reach a final plan and allocate the necessary funds for this project in the state's 1999 fiscal budget.

Minister of Administra-

tive Development Bassam Emoush said the prime minister has entrusted the ministry to work in conjunction with the Armed Forces to prepare a joint working paper for the project. Emoush added that the national, or conscription, service was suspended several years ago but was not scrapped.

He said the objective of reinstating the national service is to find employment for jobless youth in implementation of the King's directives to the government.

Referring to non-Jordanian workers in the Kingdom, the minister said that only 90,000 illegal workers, or 20 per cent of the government's estimate of foreigners working in the country, have rectified their status to meet the requirements of the Labour Law.

Tawjihi, secondary school reforms part of education minister's proposed programme

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Fawzi Gharaibeh, the new education minister and long-time president of the University of Jordan, has a blueprint for the reform of the country's educational system.

Partly short term, partly long term, the plan would deal with the basic components of secondary school education and procedures for enrolment at universities.

A major aim of the plan will be the eventual discontinuance of the tawjihi examination (the high school general certificate exam), a measure many educationalists have been promoting for several years.

Meanwhile, Gharaibeh said, the exaggerated fear of the tawjihi, created by society and some higher education institutions, "must be eliminated."

Placing less value on tawjihi scores would help remove the "tawjihi complex," a problem which Gharaibeh said puts unjustified pressure on students. Educators must encourage students to focus more on



Fawzi Gharaibeh

their studies instead of simply seeking high marks to enter universities, the minister told the Jordan Times during an interview on Monday.

He said the emphasis on grades "distorts education's essence and is dangerous."

In the long run, Gharaibeh said, the plan will require higher education institutions to develop new standards to evaluate and accept students into universities. Such standards, he said, would involve not only grades but personal interviews with

applicants and aptitude tests.

Admission to Jordan's public and private universities has so far been based mainly on grades and tawjihi scores. The system of allotting seats in the various faculties has been restrictive. Often, the result is that students who are admitted to the Kingdom's institutions of higher learning find themselves in areas of study they did not choose but were placed into by current regulations.

Gharaibeh's blueprint calls for a much freer education system and the establishment of a national independent centre within five years that would be charged with reviewing, evaluating and reorganising school examinations, school and university standards and accreditation, as well as professional exams.

Freeing up the basic education curriculum would mean eliminating the literary and scientific streams in the 11th and 12th grades. The proposal is to allow students some choice in their subjects while setting a new basic core of courses required for graduation and

adding certain subjects, decided by universities, to prepare those who plan to continue their education.

The minister said the numerical grading system could also be changed to measure grades within levels defined by letters, such as A and B.

Textbooks might not be limited to those selected by the government, Gharaibeh said, because "any book that meets the general criteria could be studied and approved provided it is in the student's interest."

The entire plan, according to Gharaibeh, is still in its conceptual phase and will require not only sufficient funds but qualified experts with the vision to carry it out.

The minister also spoke on the need to keep the higher education system independent of the labour market, stating that "universities are not employment agencies."

"Higher education was not originally created to meet the labour market's needs and reap high salaries. It was made for those who want to learn," Gharaibeh said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Abdullah opens exhibition

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Abdullah on Monday opened an exhibition at the Amman International Fair in Jarj Al Hamam as part of the celebrations leading up to His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday on Nov. 14. The exhibition, which is being held under the theme Jordan Yesterday and Today, will highlight the achievements Jordan has made since the King assumed constitutional powers. Taking part in the exhibition, which runs through Nov. 6, are 100 representatives of the public and private sectors. The head of the exhibition's organising committee, Salman Qudiah, presented a gift to Prince Abdullah in appreciation of his efforts and patronage of the exhibition.

Sproul receives 1997 audit report

AMMAN (Petra) — The speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Sa'd Hayel Sproul, Monday received the audit Bureau's 1997 report from its president, Eid Harabseh. According to the Constitution, the bureau must present a general report to the Lower House on its audit of state revenues and expenditures at the beginning of each ordinary session or upon the House's request.

Minister visits prison

AMMAN (Petra) — Interior Minister Nayef Qadi on Monday stressed the importance of safeguarding prisoners' dignity and providing for their needs and requirements, including educational and cultural. Qadi, who is speaking during a visit to the H-4 prison in southern Jordan, said the Interior Ministry will coordinate with the Public Security Department to provide the necessary facilities to enable prisoners' families to visit them and to stay with them for longer periods. Qadi, who was accompanied by Deputy Ahmad Azaydeh, head of the House's Public Freedoms Committee, and Deputy Assaf Assaf, stressed satisfaction with the health and general conditions of the prison and promised more improvements. Qadi commended the efforts of the prison authorities expressed satisfaction with the prisoners' living conditions.

Jordan has 'long way to go' in fight against drugs — official

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Public Security Department Monday opened a two-week training seminar organised in conjunction with German criminal investigation departments on fighting substance abuse and drug trafficking.

In an address at the opening session, PSD Director Nasouh Muhieddin said that despite his department's efforts to deal with drug trafficking, "there is a long way to go to stem the illicit practice."

Referring to ongoing cooperation between Germany and Jordan, Muhieddin said the two countries are exchanging expertise and information on means of combating drug trafficking and addiction.

He added that the drug problem in Jordan has not yet reached a dangerous level and that trafficking is under control.

In September, Information Minister Nasser Judeh said the drug problem in Jordan is "serious but not alarming," adding that the PSD has been largely successful in both stemming drug trafficking and rehabilitating users.

Judeh also told the press that the amount of heroin

seized by the department from 1996-1998 equalled the amount seized during the previous 20 years.

Last December, the PSD's Anti-Narcotics Department disclosed that substance abuse had increased over the past few years, with over 3,000 citizens suffering from drug dependency.

Muhieddin said His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, have expressed desire to provide the PSD with its needs to confront the drug problem.

German Ambassador Peter Mende, in his address, commended the ongoing cooperation between Jordan and Germany in training personnel to deal with the drug problem.

Drug trafficking and addiction is a worldwide issue that can only be stemmed through inter-governmental efforts, said Mende, adding that the German government is keen on providing the PSD with equipment to deal with the problem.

According to PSD statistics, a total of 492 drug cases reportedly involving 102 non-Jordanian nationals were prosecuted in 1997.

What's going on

M. film "Der Weltmeister" (with subtitles in Arabic) at Goethe-Institut, Jabbal Amman on Nov. 4 at 7:00 p.m.

CURE

romance: el gitano y el cello" (in Spanish) at V.A. Gonzalez, Quesada at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman at 5:00 p.m. (Tel. 4610858).

Literary Works of Pío Baroja (in Arabic) at Ahmad Ibn Jallal Al Farabi Centre, University of Jordan on Wednesday 1:00 p.m.

Y2K Challenge: Where Are We Now? by

John Cunningham at USIS auditorium, American Center, Abdoun at 5:00 p.m. (Tel. 592-0101 ext. 2579).

EXHIBITIONS

"Jordan Yesterday and Today" (marking His Majesty King Hussein's birthday) at the Amman International Fair, Jarj Al Hamam, until Nov. 6.

A three-dimensional exhibition on canvas by Susana Caldwell, Darleen Karpowicz, and Rawabi Abu Ghazaleh Silawi at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre (Artisana), Jabbal Amman, off the second circle until Nov. 10 (Tel. 4647858).

"Masterworks of the Spanish Contemporary

Architecture and Presentation of Architecture Guide: Spain 1920-2000" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman, until Nov. 6.

Ceramics by Ra'ud and Ahmad Al Delaimi at Hammurabi Arts Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 5536098), until Nov. 5.

Exhibition of works by Palestinian artist Kamal Boullata entitled "Homage to Jerusalem," an exhibition of paintings by late Palestinian artist Zulfai Al Sa'idi, an exhibition by Palestinian-American photographer Sa'idi Nuseibeh entitled "The Farthest Mosque" at Durrat Al Fuman, Jabbal Weibdeh, until Nov. 12 (Tel. 4843251/2).

Handwritten signature in Arabic script.

'Pinochet arrest no threat for Chilean democracy'

MADRID (AFP) — Chilean deputy Isabel Allende, daughter of the president deposed by General Augusto Pinochet, said Monday her country's democracy was not threatened by the former dictator's arrest in London.

She warned, however, that is was in danger from Pinochet supporters "who burn Spanish and British flags" and demonstrate "intolerance, violence and the lack of democratic will."

Allende, whose father Salvador Allende died in Pinochet's 1973 coup, made a brief stop-over in Spain en route for London, where she aims to address Britain's highest court, the House of Lords.

The court will hear an appeal Wednesday and Thursday against the quashing of Pinochet's arrest on accusations of genocide and other crimes committed during his 1973-1990 military rule.

Pinochet, 82, is on conditional bail in a private London hospital, under a police guard, pending the hearing.

He was arrested on Oct. 16, as he recuperated from back surgery, at the request of a Spanish judge investigating genocide and other large-scale human rights abuses in Chile.

Wednesday, the High Court quashed the arrest, arguing that he enjoyed sovereign immunity as a head of state when the

crimes were said to have been committed.

Allende was accompanied by two other Chilean deputies, Sofia Prat, whose father General Prat was killed in Buenos Aires in 1974, and Juan Pablo Letelier, son of President Allende's foreign minister who was murdered in Washington.

Socialist deputy Allende said she would give a "fundamental testimony" to Britain's upper chamber.

She said: "We are fighting for the principles of justice, so that the horrible crimes of the Chilean dictatorship do not profit from immunity."

The three parliamentary deputies are due to be heard by the Lords Tuesday.

EU ministers to discuss defence arm, with eye on Kosovo

VIENNA (AFP) — EU defence ministers, meeting for the first time at a Europe-wide level, are to hold informal talks in Vienna this week dominated by calls to give the European Union a proper defence and security arm.

The debate has been revived in recent weeks in particular by Britain, which last month dropped its long-standing opposition to such an initiative, in particular due to the latest crisis in Kosovo.

"If we want Europe to match the Americans for clout, there has to be that commitment and readiness to act in military situations," British Premier Tony Blair said at an informal summit of EU leaders on Oct. 24.

The Vienna meeting, an initiative by the Austrian EU presidency, was organised despite reluctance by a number of countries who are sceptical about organising defence at an EU level. Talks begin late Tuesday and continue Wednesday.

Participants include Western European Union

(WEU) head Jose Guterres, although an invitation to EU foreign policy commissioner Hans van den Broek was cancelled after concern his presence would make the meeting too formal.

The purpose of the 10-member WEU, founded in 1948, is regularly called into question. Its small-scale activities included sending some 100 police to Bosnia and Albania. It is absent in Kosovo.

Blair's policy shift has been welcomed by his fellow leaders notably because, only 16 months ago, he was instrumental in blocking Franco-German plans to give the EU a defence arm through a merger with the WEU.

Blair, leading a discussion on the development of the bloc's much derided foreign policy, said last month events in Kosovo had clearly demonstrated the EU had to be able to back up its diplomatic threat.

"Kosovo showed us far too often to be dithering and disunited," he said. German Chancellor

Gerhard Schröder called his ideas "new and impressive," while French President Jacques Chirac welcomed the presentation as a clear signal of London's "greater commitment to the goal of European defence."

But Blair's sudden conversion to the cause of European defence, long cherished by France in particular, has also been greeted with some scepticism on the continent.

The move has been widely seen as an attempt to assert the Blair government's commitment to playing a leading role in Europe, despite its decision to stay outside the single currency.

Blair made it clear that Britain would not go along with any move that would undermine NATO's role as the primary guarantor of European security. But he insisted he was open-minded about other options.

Arrangements will also have to be made to allow the EU's four neutral states — Austria, Finland, Ireland and Sweden — to opt out of any defence arm.



Nada Sakic in a photo dating from Easter 1945 stands with her husband Dinko in front of their house in Zagreb. She was extradited from Argentina Sunday to face war crimes charges in her native Croatia, where she was expected to arrive late Monday (Reuters photo)

Croatian woman, 72, sent home to face war crimes trial

ZAGREB (AFP) — A 72-year-old Croatian woman was due to arrive here Monday after being extradited from Argentina to face charges that she tortured women in a World War II concentration camp, her lawyer said.

Nada Sakic was expected to arrive at 7:00 p.m. (1800 GMT). She has Parkinson's disease and would likely be transferred to the hospital wing of a Zagreb jail, her

lawyer Branko Seric said. Officials in Argentina put Sakic on a plane Sunday for Croatia. She has been held in an Argentine jail since July 23.

Sakic allegedly ran the women's sector of a camp at Stara Gradiska, near Jasenovac, in Croatia and is accused of torturing inmates. At an extradition hearing she denied the charges.

Sakic, 76, who was extradited to Croatia on June 18 to face war crimes charges as director of the Jasenovac camp, southwest of Zagreb, in 1942-44 when Croatia was allied with Nazi Germany under the fascist Ustasha regime.

Thousands of Serbs, Jews and gypsies were murdered at the camp. Nada Sakic is due to appear in court here Tuesday.

Bishop urges understanding for Charles and Camilla

LONDON (AFP) — A leading bishop pleaded Monday for "understanding and compassion" for Prince Charles and his long-term mistress Camilla Parker Bowles.

The Bishop of Oxford, the Right Reverend Richard Harries, said many people would have a "fellow-feeling" with the couple, who should not be pushed into marriage.

His comments, following on similarly sympathetic remarks by another senior bishop Sunday, appeared to mark a softening of the Church of England's stance to Charles' relationship with Parker Bowles.

"The fact that they can get some support and mutual encouragement from one another, and clearly have a very deep relationship, I think, deserves understanding and compassion," Harries told BBC radio.

The bishop, who is chairman of the Church of England's board of social responsibility, said there was no need for Charles to rush into marriage to formalise his relationship

with Camilla. "At the moment, Prince Charles has made it quite clear that he and Camilla have no short-term or medium-term plans to get married, and I don't think, whether it's Prince Charles or anybody else, we should push any couple into any kind of precipitate action," he added.

Charles divorced Diana in 1996, a year after Parker Bowles divorced her husband.

Traditionally the church has been against divorced couples remarrying. The position is more delicate for Charles because, on becoming king, he takes the title of "Defender of the Faith" or head of the church of England.

Sunday, the Bishop of Southwark, the Right Reverend Tom Butler, also indicated Charles' relationship with Parker Bowles should not stand in his way.

"Her friendship is very important to him, that's quite obvious, and I am not one of those people who thinks he should give her up," he said.

He said that any monarch's position as the head of the Church of England was "purely constitutional" and had "nothing to do with his or her life."

Two years ago, a poll showed that more than half of bishops and clergy thought Charles would be unacceptable as king and head of the Church if he remarried.

Since Diana's death in a car crash in Paris last year, Charles has been trying to rebuild his public image, attempting to relegate to the past the acrimony of the divorce.

At the same time the public appears to have begun to accept Camilla, with some polls indicating that most people would accept him as king even if he remarried, although they still do not want her as queen.

Camilla has met Charles' two sons by Diana, Princes William and Harry, and two weeks ago, the couple issued their first joint statement, disassociating themselves from a new book critical of his late ex-wife.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Social Democrats nominate Rau to be German president

BONN (AFP) — The leadership of the ruling Social Democrats (SPD) has nominated veteran politician Johannes Rau to be Germany's next president. The nomination ends a dispute within the party about whether a woman would be nominated for the honorary position of head of state, with the successor to current President Roman Herzog to be elected May 23. Twenty-six of the 30 members of the executive committee voted for Rau. Four abstained. West and then reunified Germany have had seven presidents, all men, since forming a post-war government in 1949. SPD women had said it was time for one of them to be named. Rau, 67, the losing SPD chancellor candidate in 1987 to Chancellor Helmut Kohl and a former governor of North Rhine-Westphalia state, has the backing however of SPD Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, as well as SPD party chief Oskar Lafontaine. The new president to succeed Herzog, elected during former chancellor Helmut Kohl's conservative administration, is to be elected May 23 in Berlin by a federal convention. The SPD and their coalition partners the Greens ecologists have a majority in this convention which convenes only to elect a president. It consists of the members of the lower house of parliament, the Bundestag, and an equal number of members elected by the state parliaments.

Christian Democrat leads Bucharest mayor race

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Christian Democrat Viorel Lis won the first round of mayoral ballots in Bucharest, but will have to win next weekend's run-off to secure office, election officials said Monday. Lis, currently interim mayor, won 44.6 per cent of the vote in the elections Sunday, less than the 50 per cent needed for outright victory. He will face opposition candidate Sorin Oprea, who scored 27 per cent, next Sunday. The run-off may be tighter than expected, since several left-wing candidates from the first round have called on their supporters to back Oprea. The Bucharest ballots are seen as a key test of the popularity of the Democratic Convention, the loose coalition of centre-right groups which won 1996 parliamentary elections, two years ahead of fresh legislative and presidential elections. The elections have been marred by voter apathy. Turnout was 36.2 per cent, only just above the level the previous weekend when the ballots were cancelled because turnout did not reach 51 per cent. No such requirement was fixed for the new elections.

Churchill considered poison gas attack on Germany

LONDON (AP) — Winston Churchill considered unleashing poison gas on Germany in the last year of World War II. The Guardian newspaper reported Monday, citing a memo recently discovered in Britain's public archives, the newspaper said Churchill contemplated a mustard gas attack that would "drench the cities of Ruhr and many other cities in Germany in such a way that most of the population would be requiring medical attention." Churchill's comments were made in the letter to General Sir Hastings Ismay, secretary of the War Cabinet, on July 6, 1944, one month after the D-Day landings, the newspaper said. The memo will be featured in a Scottish Television programme, Secret Scotland, Tuesday. Churchill said the only reason that Germany had not used the gas on Allies was because "they fear retaliation. Not certainly out of moral scruples or affection for us," he wrote. But Churchill added that he would not use the gas unless it could be shown it was "life or death for us" or "it would shorten the war by a year." The Guardian said, "In the meanwhile, I want the matter studied in cold blood by sensible people and not by that particular set of psalm-singing uniformed defeatists which one runs across now here and there," Churchill wrote. After some study, Ismay told Churchill the military chiefs thought a gas attack would not have a "decisive" effect on the war and Churchill accepted their decision.

Swiss hold U.S.-Egyptian citizen over credit card fraud

ZURICH, Switzerland (AP) — A dual citizen of the United States and Egypt is under arrest in Switzerland on charges of credit card fraud, Zurich state police said Monday. The 41-year-old man, who was not identified, was stopped at Zurich airport in April after a tip from airline employees, a police statement said. He is wanted in the United States for use of stolen and forged credit cards and robbery, and a U.S. request for his extradition is pending. The suspect was given a 10-month jail sentence for credit card fraud in Geneva in 1996 and deported, Zurich police said. Spokesman Hans Leuenberger said he had no details on where the man lived. He had frequently been seen on flights from Amsterdam to Cairo via Zurich, Leuenberger added. One of the credit cards the man was carrying was overdrawn by 70,000 francs (\$51,900). The suspect is accused of making illegal purchases to the value of more than 200,000 Swiss francs (\$148,000), police said. The five cards, used all, had a credit limit between \$250 and \$350. Most of the purchases were made at airport duty-free shops and on board aeroplanes, where crew members noticed frequent purchases he made with different credit cards.

Cold wave kills five in Moscow in last two weeks

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's first cold wave of the season has already killed four people in the last two weeks, medical officials in Moscow said Monday. Interfax news agency said the homeless and alcoholics were usually the first victims of sudden temperature changes in Russia where the thermometer often dips below zero at night. Meteorologists have predicted a particularly hard winter this year in Russia, where people are already trying to grapple with a severe economic crisis.

Body of U.S. mountaineer cremated

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP) — A veteran U.S. climber who died while leading a nine-member trekking team to Mt. Kalapatar in the Himalayas two days ago was cremated by his friends Monday. Lute Jerstad, 61, who 1963 became one of the first Americans to climb Mt. Everest, died of a heart attack Saturday in Tukla, just 1.5 metres short of the 4,545 metre peak of Mt. Kalapatar. From that high point, Jerstad hoped to gaze on Mt. Everest, the peak he climbed 35 years ago. Jerstad's body was brought by helicopter to Katmandu and cremated on the banks of the holy Bagmati River. The trekking group he led included his stepdaughter and 12-year-old son. The group left Katmandu early week for the trek in the Everest region and was scheduled to return Friday. Jerstad, of Portland, Oregon, climbed Everest — at 8,848 metres the world's highest mountain — when he was 26.

Hundreds evacuated after heavy rains hit Kansas, Oklahoma

AUGUSTA, Kansas (AP) — Hundreds of people waited away from home early Monday as rain-swollen rivers in Kansas and Oklahoma poured out of their banks and swamped communities with swirling, filthy water.

Kim and Gary Smith huddled up their two sons and braved the flood in their car as they sought higher ground in Augusta. Over and over, the family sang "Jesus Loves Me" to quiet their two frightened children, ages 8 and 11.

"It happened fast, the water rose fast," Mrs. Smith said.

By Sunday night, the Smiths and many of their neighbours ended up at the First Christian Church. Some were brought here by truck by National Guard crews.

Some 100 kilometres away, in north-central Oklahoma, 130 people fled their homes across Kay County after more than 15 cms of rain fell over the weekend, said Ben Frizzell of the Oklahoma Office of Emergency

Management. The slow-moving storm hit hardest in Kansas, dumping nearly 30 cms of rain on parts of Butler, Sedgwick and Harvey counties since Friday night.

Some 900 people have been evacuated in Kansas, including at least 350 people from nursing homes in Wichita. The town of Sedgwick was cut off Sunday, with all roads closed.

"As flooding in Kansas goes, this one is pretty big," said Walt Aucott of the U.S. Geological Survey. "This is just a huge volume of water."

The Whitewater River carried raw sewage into downtown Augusta, where the wastewater treatment plant was shut down and toilets were backed up throughout the town of 8,700 people.

Downtown was under 1.5 to 2.1 metres of water, said assistant city manager David Alfaro.

"Our main thing is to see what transpires in the morning, assess our damages and pray it

doesn't rain anymore," said Mayor Ross Rountree. The forecast, however, called for more rain Monday.

The Whitewater and the Walnut converge about 2.4 kilometres south of Augusta, which is bounded by water on three sides. The town is virtually an island, even when it doesn't flood.

The Kansas Army National Guard and Kansas Air National Guard were assisting evacuations and sand-bagging efforts.

At the Christian Church, displaced residents struggled in through the night, many soaking wet after wading in waist-high water. Tearful children brought their dogs and cats, only to be turned away because the Red Cross shelter didn't accept animals.

"The animals are the only thing these people have left," said one weary resident.

Rising water forced voluntary evacuations in Kay County, Oklahoma, while forecasters warned residents elsewhere in the region to prepare for flooding.

00111150



Ljubo Georgievski, leader of the ultra-nationalist party VMRO-DPMNE is mobbed by supporters celebrating their victory at the party's headquarters in the early Nov. 2 elections, following the second round of parliamentary elections. The country's Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski conceded the defeat of his Social Democrat Party in a speech to the nation (AFP photo)

Macedonians reject government, vote in right-wing coalition

SKOPJE (AFP) — Voters threw out Macedonia's social democratic government in legislative polls, handing victory to the right-wing opposition, early results showed Monday.

Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski "conceded" defeat as results of Sunday's second-round ballot began to show the extent of the opposition victory.

The opposition coalition of the VMRO-DPMNE and Democratic Alternative (DA) maintained the lead it took in the first-round ballot on October 18, in this former Yugoslav republic.

The full results are expected later Monday.

According to results given by party officials overnight, Crvenkovski's Social Democrat Party (SDSM) took around 29 seats. It held 61 in the outgoing 120-seat parliament.

The opposition of Ljubo Georgievski's VMRO-DPMNE and the DA, headed by Vasil Tupurkovski, claimed to have secured 59 seats.

Confirming his party's defeat in a televised address to the nation early Monday, Crvenkovski said his party "will be a useful and critical opposition."

"We have shown how to govern, now we will show that it is also useful to be in opposition," Crvenkovski said from the headquarters of his former Communist party.

"We are not going to question the electoral results, and we say to the new government that we will support all the right decisions," he added.

In his election campaign, the opposition coalition stressed the need for economic, political and social reforms and promised new education law to allow for private schooling.

Recession has seen unemployment soar to 40 per cent in Macedonia and the country's ethnic Albanian community has been hit particularly hard.

Thousands of people celebrated overnight a central Skopje square, while drivers

blared car horns across the city as the election results came in.

Official results will show whether the VMRO-DPMNE-DA coalition has garnered enough support to form a government.

If it fails to get a majority of seats, the Liberals of Petar Gosev have said they are ready to join a coalition. The party is expected to secure around 4 seats.

The coalition can also count on two deputies of the Socialist Party, analysts said.

Georgievski is expected to become the new premier, with Tupurkovski taking the parliamentary speaker's role.

The parties representing the ethnic Albanian community — the moderate Democratic party of Albanians (DPA) of Arben Xhaferi and the radical Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP) headed by Abdurahman Aliti

looked set to become the third force in the assembly, with 24 seats.

Georgievski and Tupurkovski, who pleaded for ethnic harmony during their election campaign, indicated they would propose that the Albanian parties join the government.

Xhaferi, who supports a call for independence by ethnic Albanians in the neighbouring Kosovo, said during the campaign that Albanians were not sufficiently represented in the outgoing government, where they held five ministries.

The Albanians, who are mainly Muslim, make up about a quarter of the two million inhabitants in the largely Orthodox country.

Meanwhile, Wolfgang Schuessel, Foreign Minister of Austria which currently holds the presidency of the European Union, Monday called for the rapid formation of a government and a "stable regime" in Macedonia.

The new government is expected to support calls for Macedonia to join the EU and NATO.

Official says kidnapped Italian priest is alive

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP) — A regional governor said Monday a kidnapped Italian priest is alive, despite reports he had died in captivity due to poor health.

Police said Sunday they were checking unconfirmed reports that the Rev. Luciano Benedetti had died recently, but teams sent to dig at his supposed burial site found nothing.

Nur Misuari, a former Muslim separatist rebel chief now serving as governor of a southern autonomous Muslim region, said emissaries who have contact with the abductors

told him Benedetti was alive.

Misuari is helping the government negotiate for the release of Benedetti and other foreign and Filipino captives still in the hands of kidnappers in the southern region of Mindanao.

Benedetti, 54, from Treviso, was kidnapped Sept. 8 by suspected Muslim rebels in Sibuyan island in Zamboanga del Norte province, about 50 kilometres northwest of Zamboanga City. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of 7 million pesos (\$1.75 million), police said.

At least 15 people have been kidnapped in the southern Philippines since last month. Benedetti was among five foreigners and five Filipino traders still being held by their captors in the region.

Government troops launched an offensive Friday against a suspected rebel lair in Sulu province, also in Mindanao, to try to rescue two kidnapped Hong Kong citizens and a Malaysian.

Military officials said the three captives have not been found. At least three civilians, believed to be sympathisers of the kidnappers, have been killed in sporadic gunfights between the troops

and the suspected abductors. President Joseph Estrada has launched a high-profile campaign against ransom kidnappings and scored a major victory last month with the rescue of several kidnapping victims and the arrest of their abductors in Manila.

Monday, police announced the arrest of three more suspects in the abduction of a Filipino-Chinese store owner, his two children and a nephew in suburban Quezon City in February.

Estrada promised upon taking office in June to end the kidnappings within six months.

Death toll in Swedish fire rises to 62

GOTEBORG, Sweden (AP) — After clinging to life for three days, two youths trapped in a dance-hall fire died early Monday, bringing the death toll in the inferno to 62.

With another 17 people still in intensive care, the figure could still go higher in what is already Sweden's worst fire disaster of modern times.

The dead, as young as 12 and none older than 20, were among an estimated 400 people who were at a disco dance in a rented second-floor hall

when an explosive fire broke out shortly before midnight Thursday.

The hall had been rented out for the night by the tenant, the local association of Macedonian immigrants, to teenagers who arranged the dance.

The hall had a legal capacity of only 150 and officials say it is possible that the arrangers who allowed the hall to be severely overcrowded could be charged with contributing to others' deaths.

"It's important that people have a clear understanding that the authorities' approval of the premises was not a joke," chief prosecutor Ulf Noren, who is leading the fire investigation, was quoted as saying in the newspaper Dagens Nyheter.

However, Noren said, a decision on that question would wait until the cause of the fire has been determined.

The fire's ferociously quick spread has prompted wide speculation that it was set. But witnesses have given

widely varying accounts — some saying it appeared to start in the equipment used by the disc jockey and others saying there was smoke coming up from the emergency exit's stairway before the flames raced through the hall.

The emergency exit was blocked by flames, forcing the panicked dancers to try to flee down the one remaining stairway or leap out of second-story windows.

Most of those at the dance were immigrants or children of immigrant parents.

Irish premier Ahern in Belfast to push peace

BELFAST (AFP) — Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern was heading to Belfast Monday for intensive roundtable talks aimed at kickstarting the stalled Northern Ireland peace process.

His move came after a weekend in which the province missed a key deadline of the April 10 peace accord and witnessed another sectarian killing.

Ahern was to hold a series of private meetings with party leaders in a bid to break the deadlock over disarmament, which is holding up implementation of the agreement.

Northern Ireland's First Minister, David Trimble, refuses to let the IRA's political wing Sinn Fein sit on a shadow power-sharing executive until the Irish Republican Army begins disarming.

Sinn Fein however points to the letter of the accord, which does not set any condition for membership of the executive and says only that disarmament must take place within two years.

The result is a stalled

peace process, with both Trimble's Protestant Unionists and Roman Catholic republicans blaming each other for failing to create the executive and a cross-border body comprising ministers from Dublin and Belfast by the end of October.

The need to step up the pace of implementation was underlined by politicians on all sides after the weekend murder in Belfast of a Catholic man by renegade loyalists.

Brian Service, 35, was shot dead as he walked home overnight Friday in an attack claimed by a group calling itself the Red Hand Defenders.

Trimble and his Catholic deputy Seamus Mallon issued a joint statement insisting the peace process would not be jeopardised by the shooting.

"If this murder is designed to derail the peace then it will fail," they said.

The group of disaffected loyalists who oppose the peace agreement emerged in the summer when they claimed responsibility for a

hast homh attack which killed a Catholic police officer during riots in Portadown.

Mallon said the killing reinforced the need for speedy political progress, adding he hoped the involvement of Ahern would focus political minds on just how serious the situation was.

He also suggested a shadow executive might not come into existence until legislation giving it real powers takes effect in February.

"I think what is going to happen because of the failure to meet the Oct. 31 deadline is that shadow period will be looked upon very differently and we will move directly into the situation of devolution without a shadow period," he said.

Sunday, Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams said he had discussed blockages to the peace process with British premier Tony Blair Saturday.

"I put it to him that he has a responsibility to see that this agreement is implemented as urgently as pos-

sible," Adams told reporters.

He accused Unionist leaders of a "deliberate snail," saying they were "determined to undo the agreement."

Adams added: "Republican guns have been silenced, they have been taken out of commission."

Northern Ireland Minister Paul Murphy conceded it was "disappointing" that the Oct. 31 deadline for agreement on the new cross-border body had not been met.

"Though we have slipped a bit, there is no question that work is being done, and a lot of detailed work at that," he told BBC radio.

Decommissioning was "a difficulty. No one expected that any of this was going to be easy. But the decommissioning issue doesn't affect the cross-border bodies."

Murphy said he expected "devolution day" — when the full executive takes over from the shadow executive — to be in February or March.

Malaysia police fan out before Anwar trial

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Several dozen riot police with shields and batons fanned out Monday outside a courthouse in Malaysia's capital moments before the criminal trial of sacked Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim was due to begin.

Police also took up positions at adjacent Merdeka (Freedom) Square, which was quiet. More than 100 journalists waited outside the courthouse where Anwar's trial was set to start at 9 a.m. (0100 GMT).

Supporters of Anwar had called for a street demonstration outside the courthouse but there was no sign of protesters.

Traffic on the wide boulevard between the courthouse and the central square was normal.

Anwar was sacked as deputy prime minister and finance minister on Sept. 2 and arrested 18 days later after leading 30,000 anti-government protesters through the streets of the capital and Merdeka Square.

He was later indicted on 10 counts of corruption and sodomy. He has pleaded not guilty to all of the charges.

Malaysia does not have a jury system and the allegations will be heard by a single judge, Augustine Paul.

Malaysia's attorney-general said Saturday that the

High Court trial was expected to last until next June and that Anwar would then be charged with more sexual offences.

Anwar has said he is the victim of a conspiracy to ruin his political career.

Anwar's trial is at the heart of the political unrest that has gained momentum since his arrest.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad told Reuters Saturday he believed Anwar's supporters, who have mounted sporadic protests in the capital, wanted to topple the government to prevent his trial.

London-based Amnesty International said Anwar's trial was a critical test for the future of human rights in Malaysia.

"The significance of today's trial goes far beyond the fate of Anwar Ibrahim," the human rights group said in a statement.

"The trial and its outcome will influence the path Malaysia takes as a society, either towards greater respect for the human rights principles enshrined in the Malaysian Constitution... or towards a more repressive climate marked by the arbitrary and selective use of the law for political purposes," it said.

Amnesty said it considered Anwar to be a prisoner of conscience imprisoned for his political activity.

Anwar, who won international respect as finance minister, has called on Mahathir to step down after 17 years in power.

Several rights groups including Amnesty and several legislators from the Philippines were expected to send observers to the trial.

But Malaysia's chief justice said at the weekend there would be no special arrangements for either foreign news organisations or foreign observers.

The presiding judge ruled last month that the trial would be held in English to accommodate international media, which has closely covered the unrest in Malaysia.

But the chief justice later said by law the trial had to be conducted in Bahasa Malaysia. Anwar's lawyers said the judge had the discretion to allow English also to be used during the trial.

In the first phase of the trial, the court was to hear four of the five corruption charges. Each of the corruption counts carries a maximum penalty of 14 years in jail and a 20,000 ringgit (\$5,000) fine.

Each of the five sodomy charges carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in jail and whipping.

Chinese archaeologists uncover Great Wall section under desert sand

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese archaeologists have discovered a section of the Great Wall dating back more than 1,400 years, some 700 kilometres west of Beijing, the official Xinhua news agency reported Monday.

The report quoted Wang Huimin, an authority on the Great Wall from the Ningxia Institute of Archaeology, as saying the 25-kilometre long section was built in the Sui dynasty (581-618 AD).

Wang, who has just completed a two-month field study, said the Sui Great Wall located in Musu desert in northern Ningxia province was totally different from other parts of the Great Wall in color and architectural structure.

Most parts of the Great Wall, which dates back more than 2,000 years,

were either light yellow in color or blue-grey.

The remains of the Sui Great Wall, made of red sandy soil and purple siltstone, are from one to 2.8 metres high and five to 13 metres wide, with the remains of a ditch on the outer side.

He said most parts of the Great Wall built in other dynasties were made of packed-down soil or bricks.

Wang said traces of the wall were first spotted in a photo taken from a U.S. space shuttle during a Sino-U.S. joint research programme on the Great Wall and Silk Road in the deserts of western China.

As the section was buried under the desert for a long time, it was not discovered until desert control efforts dispersed the sands, inch by inch, and it rose higher and higher above the ground

over the past decade.

The Sui Great Wall lies parallel to a 178-kilometre-long section of wall built in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.).

According to historical records, the total length of the Great Wall, built over many dynasties, is some 6,000 kilometres.

The Sui Great Wall stretches over 350 kilometres from Suide in Shaanxi province to Lingwu in Ningxia.

Wang said most of what is called the Sui Great Wall was rebuilt during the Ming Dynasty. The newly discovered section is the only part found so far that was actually built during the Sui Dynasty.

Construction of the Great Wall, which was meant to keep out invaders, began in the Qin dynasty (221-207 BC).

Guatemala plane crash kills twelve

GUATEMALA CITY (R) — Twelve people died and six — all American women — were badly injured when a small plane crashed into a mountain Sunday in thick fog and rain in southwestern Guatemala, officials said.

They said the dead could also include U.S. citizens.

Carlos Barrios, of the Fire Brigade in the district of Quetzaltenango, told Reuters the six injured survivors were all American women. National Fire Brigade spokesman Williams de Leon added it seemed the dead were also U.S. citizens.

"Due to the registration of the aircraft and the appearance of the victims, we presume they were foreigners though we are not fully certain they were Americans," de Leon told reporters.

The small aircraft, which apparently may have belonged to a Christian missionary organisation operating in the Central American country, ploughed into a hillside in the district of Quetzaltenango, near the town of Chajahal Olintepue, 180 km southwest of Guatemala City.

The six crash survivors were seriously injured and spoke no Spanish. One said she was from the U.S. state of California and three others said they came from the state of Missouri. Barrios said. He did not say where the other two had said they came from.

Barrios said the area was badly affected by rain and thick fog because of tropical depression Mitch, a storm that has caused widespread damage in Central America this week.

Preliminary reports said the plane had taken off from the town of Playa Grande in the district of Quiche, 240 km north of the capital and had run into bad weather.

Mitch, at one stage one of the most powerful Atlantic hurricanes this century, has caused at least 875 deaths throughout Central America over the past week. By late on Sunday, the storm was dissipating itself over the Mexican-Guatemalan border, near the Mexican Pacific coast city of Tapachula, the U.S. National Hurricane Centre said in a bulletin.

Jordan Times

Chairman of the Board of Directors
Abdel Salam Tarawneh

Vice Chairman & Director General
Mohammad Amad

Executive Editor
Abdullah Hasanah

Responsible Editor
Elia Nasrallah

Editorial and Advertising offices
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman

Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585

Facsimile: Editorial: 5696183, Advertising: 5693337

E-mail: jtimes@go.com.jo

Web Site: http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department

Peace via peaceful means

IT IS certainly the right of individuals and groups to express their opinion or judgement on the peace process in general and the recent Wye River deal in particular, but to incite violence against peace and peace-makers is unacceptable. The former is clearly a constitutional right which should be upheld, but the latter is illegal under existing laws in the country and should not be tolerated. This dictum applies to all Jordanians and political parties of all persuasions. Hamas and its followers are obviously no exception to the rule. This is our understanding of the recent warning of the government against Hamas and parties which have intentionally and deliberately called for violent opposition to the Wye River agreement that was reached between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat last week in Washington.

It is unfortunate that Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza has declared a war against the Wye accord upon its conclusion and promised to carry out more violent attacks against Israeli targets. Hamas further escalated its tone in the wake of the clampdown on its members in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by the Palestinian authorities and threatened the lives of Palestinian officials. There are certainly a great many reservations about the way the peace process has so far been conducted, but to declare jihad against those people who still believe that it offers the best hope for Palestinians and Israelis despite its shortcomings is anathema to our principles, ideas and laws. Hamas should play the game by the rules. The Islamist party may say anything it wants against recent agreements with Israel but it cannot silence others who have a different interpretation of these peace pacts, by intimidation and threat to their lives.

The government is therefore right on course to warn those who are vehemently opposed to the Wye agreement not to resort to violence or incitement. The Wye deal has its opponents in both the Israeli and Palestinian camps. If the extremists in both camps have it their own way there will be a lot of bloodshed, and only the innocent will suffer. It is therefore the responsibility of all governments of the region and the peace-makers to ensure that violence will have no opportunity to derail peace.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Tarq Masarwah lashed out at the United States for maintaining the eight-year-old sanctions on Iraq. He said that then President George Bush delivered a speech in 1991 addressing the American people describing the allies' victory after evicting Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait. Bush announced that the allies were able to destroy Iraq's entire arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. How come, asked the writer, the United States announced this eight years ago, and still imposes these atrocious sanctions on the Iraqi people. He said the world must do something to save the Iraqi children dying every day as a result of these unjustified and inhuman sanctions.

Al Dustour's Jihad Momani supported Iraq in its decision to halt its cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM). He said Iraq needed to tell the world once again about their plight and how easy it has become for the U.N. to extend the sanctions. He said the process of extending the sanctions does not take the United Nations Security Council more than 15 minutes, but Iraq must be prepared to risk a military confrontation with the United States in order to gain any attention, said Momani. He added that Iraq's latest crisis with the U.N., earlier this year, gained Iraq people's sympathy and caused division within Arab states supporting the sanctions. The Iraqi leadership realises that sanctions will not be lifted unless UNSCOM is constantly harassed, claims Momani, or it makes some small mistake that will render its mission invalid.

View from the Fourth Circle

Humility in a place of enduring spirituality

Rami G. Khouri

(BETHABARA, THE JORDAN VALLEY) — This site and region called Bethabara is an appropriate place from which to reflect on several issues that simultaneously preoccupy us these days — issues of war and peace in the Holy Land, the Millennium celebrations in the year 2000, and the overriding challenge of sustainable human development in an environmentally sensitive manner. Bethabara is the ancient name of a settlement that dates back to the time of Jesus Christ, who was one of several Abrahamic prophets and personalities who gave it its historical and spiritual importance. This is the settlement (village? hamlet?) where John the Baptist lived and baptised, and in the Bible it is usually called "Bethany beyond the Jordan" (John 1:28), though the name Bethabara was also given to it in the 3rd Century AD. In Arabic and Greek it has also been known by such other names as Beit 'Aharah, Beit 'Anyah, Safsafas, and 'Aynon. This is the place where the prophet Elijah miraculously walked over the Jordan River (with his anointed successor the prophet Elisha) and ascended to heaven on a chariot and horses of fire (the small hill that forms the core of Bethabara/Bethany beyond the Jordan has been known for centuries, if not millennia, as Elijah's Hill, or Tell Mar Elias in Arabic). Moses finalised his laws here before walking up to nearby Mt. Nebo to view the promised land and die, and this is the area where God appeared to Moses and Joshua "in a pillar of cloud." Here also Joshua crossed the Jordan River to enter the promised land, and the biblical leaders Jephthah and Gideon may both have crossed the Jordan River at the ford here as they battled foes such as the Midianites and the Ephraimites. The site of Bethabara/Bethany beyond the Jordan has been rediscovered in recent years and is now being excavated and conserved by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. Infrastructural works are being built to allow visitors and pilgrims to visit this region that is spiritually and historically significant to Muslims, Christians and Jews alike. The site is located along the southern bank of the small spring-fed stream called Wadi Kharrar, less than two kilometres east of the Jordan River, eight kilometres north of the Dead Sea, and just half an hour from Amman. The Wadi Kharrar is a magical oasis of lush greenery, frogs, birds, and the occasional wild boar with-

in a wider expanse of rich farmlands. On its short route to the Jordan River, the Wadi Kharrar passes through the farmlands, and then through a stark and desolate area of white marl hills that was part of the wilderness where Jesus spent 40 days after he had been baptised by John in the Bethabara region. Then the wadi winds its way through a thick forest adjacent to the Jordan River (the biblical "jungle of the Jordan"), before breaking through the 15-metre-high cliffs flanking the river itself and merging with the Jordan River for a final slow, meandering journey to the Dead Sea.

We have here a unique micro-environment of a spring and lush wadi oasis within, successively, a marl desert, a dense tropical forest, and rich arable farmlands, all enveloped by a wide plain leading to the mountains on the east and west banks of the Jordan River. The Bethabara/Bethany region between the settlement at Elijah's Hill and the Jordan River offers a deeply moving combination of spirituality and natural splendour. It will be exploited for touristic purposes for many years to come, and also for religious pilgrimages. But now, before this site is developed and opened for mass tourism, we should perhaps pause for a moment and ponder the message that this magical and blessed place may be trying to tell us — perhaps has been trying to tell us ever since Abraham and Moses passed this way several thousand years ago. I see two major challenges that Bethabara/Bethany places before us all. The first is rather straightforward: Jordanians and their spiritual soul brothers around the world who seek to make this site accessible to tourists and pilgrims are challenged to do so in a manner that respects and preserves the spiritual and ecological integrity of this region.

Jordan has a relatively poor track record of preserving the natural integrity of its cultural heritage and environmental resources (witness Jerash and Petra, for example). We must institute much stricter self-control on the instinct to build and pave, so as not to turn Bethabara/Bethany beyond the Jordan into another souvenir bazaar. The second challenge is more complex: we should try to understand the relationship between land and prophecy, between God, geography and humankind. What does it mean to us today that God sent all these prophets to this same place, repeatedly trying to send us

a message about how we should behave towards one another and towards a higher spiritual covenant that aims to help us live a righteous life? The celebrations of the Millennium provide the opportunity to address these two challenges simultaneously, and to ponder the full significance of what it means that Elijah, Moses, Joshua, Elisha, Jesus, and John the Baptist once stood on this spot. The biblical texts are notoriously imprecise in terms of historical geography, and much about the historicity and geography of these prophets and places is contested, even imaginary for some people. The moral legacy is much stronger, more enduring, and — for all of us in the modern Middle East — compellingly relevant. Is it possible, for example, that we can all commemorate the Millennium while also allowing colonial occupation and settlement of land, and terror against civilians, to continue in the same area where God repeatedly sent these and other prophets to preach a message of tolerance, justice and, above all, humility? Is the Millennium essentially a touristic or an ethical jamboree? Is it about what happened 2000 years ago, or about how we are advised to live our lives today and in the future? Does a prophetic message have a shelf life? What, precisely, were Moses, Joshua, Elijah, John the Baptist and Jesus all doing here? Did God send them here to pave the way for mass tourism in the 20th and 21st centuries, or to pave the way for a life of justice, tolerance and peace among peoples of different ethnicity and faith? The answers to these questions — and the proper historical context in which to assess them — are appropriately sought in places like Bethabara/Bethany beyond the Jordan, and other sites of recurring spirituality. The whole point about these places and the prophets that made them so special, however, is not mainly about the place, but about the moral principles and dictates that are associated with the place. Arab-Israeli peace negotiators who seek to exchange land for peace, or land for security, or land for dinner at the White House, or whatever this show is all about these days, should perhaps come here to Bethabara/Bethany beyond the Jordan and spend a few hours amidst the spectacular natural and spiritual beauty of this place, in order to refocus more clearly on what is important in life, and also on what is virtuous, sustainable, and — above all — what is just and humble in life.

The International Criminal Court: Setting the record straight

ON 17 JULY 1998, in Rome, 160 nations decided to establish a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) to try individuals for the most serious offences of global concern, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The agreement was hailed by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan as "a giant step forward in the march towards universal human rights and the rule of law." But some critics think the ICC will be, at best, an ineffective body, and at worst, a dangerous threat to national sovereignty. This fact sheet addresses some common questions and misconceptions.

The U.N. General Assembly first recognised the need for such a court in 1948, following the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials after World War II, and it has been under discussion at the U.N. ever since. But recently, the horrific events in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, for which ad hoc tribunals were established by the U.N. Security Council, spurred international interest in the need for a permanent mechanism to prosecute mass murderers and war criminals. A permanent court would be able to act more quickly than ad hoc bodies, and would serve as a stronger deterrent.

The statute of the court, which was approved in Rome by an unrecorded vote of 120 in favour and seven against, with 21 abstentions, will enter into force after sixty countries have ratified it. This process usually requires the approval of the national legislature. The statute has already been signed by 30 countries, as a statement of intent to seek ratification, and will remain open for signature until December 31, 2000. The seat of the court will be at The Hague, in the Netherlands, but it will be authorised to try cases in other venues when appropriate.

Crimes within the jurisdiction of the court are genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, such as widespread or systematic extermination of civilians, enslavement, torture, rape, forced pregnancy, persecution on political, racial, ethnic or religious grounds, and enforced disappearances. The court's statute lists and defines all these crimes to avoid ambiguity.

There was wide support in Rome for including aggression as a crime, but insufficient time to agree on a precise definition. As a result, the Statute provides that crimes of aggression can be prosecuted by the court when the states parties reach agreement at a review conference on the definition, elements and conditions under which the court will exercise jurisdiction over this crime. Since the statute states that any agreement must be consistent with the U.N. Charter, it would require prior determination by the Security Council of an act of aggression.

Although there was also considerable interest in including terrorism and drug crimes in the court's mandate, countries could not agree in Rome on a definition of terrorism,

and some countries felt investigation of drug offences would be beyond the court's resources. They passed a consensus resolution recommending that states parties consider inclusion of such crimes at a future review conference.

The statute includes crimes of sexual violence such as rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy, as crimes against humanity when they are committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population. They are also war crimes when committed in international or internal armed conflicts.

National courts will always have jurisdiction. Under the principle of "complementarity," the International Criminal Court will act only when national courts are unable or unwilling. Unfortunately, in some countries, in times of conflict or social and political collapse, there may be no courts capable of dealing properly with these types of crimes. It may also be that the government in power is unwilling to prosecute its own citizens, especially if they are high-ranking. Since those commit crimes under the statute often cross borders, it is necessary for states to be able to cooperate to capture and punish them. The International Criminal Court would provide an option in such cases. The International Court of Justice deals only with disputes between states, not criminal acts by individuals.

Cases can be referred to the court by states. The court's prosecutor can also initiate an investigation into a crime that has come to his or her attention. In such cases, the court could only exercise jurisdiction if the state in whose territory the crime was committed, or the state of the nationality of the accused, is party to the statute. Cases can also be referred to the court by the U.N. Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter. In such cases, because the Council's actions under Chapter VII are of a mandatory nature, the court could exercise jurisdiction even when neither the state in whose territory the crime has been committed nor the state of nationality of the accused is a party.

There are checks and balances built into the process. The prosecutor cannot even start an investigation without permission from a pre-trial chamber of three judges. The suspect and the states concerned also have the right to challenge investigation by the prosecutor. In addition, states and the accused can challenge the jurisdiction of the court or the admissibility of the case at the trial stage. The prosecutor is obligated to defer to states able and willing to pursue their own investigations. Moreover, the U.N. Security Council can request the court to defer investigation or prosecution of a particular case for renewable one-year periods. These measures will ensure that cases are substantial and deserve investigation and prosecution by the

court. The court's statute establishes the highest international standards and guarantees of due process and fair trial. Judges must meet a number of criteria of outstanding professional competence as well as geographical and gender representation. They will be elected by the states parties to the court's statute, by no less than a two-thirds majority.

Based on evidence presented by the prosecutor, the pre-trial chamber can issue an international arrest warrant obligating all states party to the court's statute to arrest that individual. In cases referred to the court by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, which gives the Council enforcement powers binding on all countries, the court would be able to request the Security Council to use those powers to compel cooperation.

Some countries are prevented by their laws from extraditing a war criminal to another country for prosecution. However, during the negotiations for the court, many countries stated that their extradition laws would not prevent them from delivering a suspect to an international court. Other countries indicated they would change their laws.

Under existing international law, the state in whose territory genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity have been committed or whose citizens are victims of such crimes is legally obligated to investigate and prosecute persons accused of such crimes. Trial by the court would, in almost all such cases, serve to raise the standard of due process of soldiers accused of war crimes. The court's statute does not violate any existing principle of treaty law, nor has it created any entitlements or legal obligations not already existing under international law.

The court's statute serves to protect peacekeepers by outlawing attacks against soldiers or U.N. personnel involved in humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping. Also, it does not affect existing arrangements with respect to U.N. peacekeeping missions, since troop-contributing countries continue to retain criminal jurisdiction over their own soldiers on such missions.

Provided the country where the alleged crimes occurred is a state party to the U.N. Security Council refers the case to the court, a citizen can be prosecuted from a country that is not party to the agreement establishing the court. However, under the principle of complementarity, the court will act only if the national court of the accused does not prosecute him or her.

The intent behind allowing states parties to withdraw from the treaty for up to seven years is to allow a state time to change its national laws or policy to conform to the provisions of the statute.

LETTERS

To His Majesty

To the editor:

FROM SAN FRANCISCO, USA, we send our best wishes to our beloved King, Sayidna, we wish you a happy birthday, a full recovery and a prosperous life. Sayidna, your image never left our minds. We are longing to see you return home safely and to see again the face that taught us to have hope. I can't forget the day I saw you three years ago at your grandfather's mosque. I looked at your face for a moment then asked: God to protect you and to maintain you, the kind father, the great teacher and the wise leader.

Our father always tells us that you are the jewel in the crown of our all.

Nobody can dismiss what you are doing to bring the whole region a comprehensive peace so that next generations may work together. Sayidna, our father had the honour to be at your home with the Jordanian delegation to the peace negotiations, and to shake your hands. We have a photo of this on our web page, at our home in Amman and in San Francisco, but more than this, in our hearts.

Naser Abdel-Hamid Al-Mualala,
Amer Abdel-Hamid Al-Mualala,
naser@sirus.com

Don't throw stones

To the editor:

WHILE IT is true that perceptions among Americans regarding Arab Americans can and should improve, the letter written by Marina Sanchez-Rashid really stretches, twists, and convolutes all reality. I can think of many movies where Hispanics are portrayed in not so glowing terms: however, there are others where they are portrayed more than fairly. I find it disingenuous on the part of Ms. Sanchez-Rashid that she makes blanket generalisations about how Hispanics are portrayed (she fails to mention one movie which illustrates her point) and then concludes that it is an "evil play" by those who she contends run Wall Street, the U.S. Congress and Hollywood. While she does not specifically label this group, I believe she is talking about Jews. Sanchez-Rashid denounces how Hispanics are portrayed in movies and then hypocritically blames an entire ethnic group.

Jeffrey L. Hoffer,
Los Angeles, California,
U.S.

Ethnic stereotyping

To the editor:

IN ITS November 1 edition, the Jordan Times published a letter from Marina Sanchez-Rashid addressing ethnic stereotyping in the American film industry. Ms. Sanchez-Rashid concludes with the rhetorical questions: "Ask yourselves: Who owns Hollywood? Let me give you a hint: It is the same group that owns Wall Street and has incredible influence in the U.S. Congress... any guesses?"

We presume she refers to those Elders of Zion and Jewish conspirators as are left unmentioned by the letter's heading, "Hollywood's Evil Play." In the putative service of anti-racism, the letter writer and a Jordan Times sub-editor join in a racist speech act that relies on ancient stereotypes and antagonistic misinformation. A conclusion that perpetuates another stereotype severely wrongs an argument against stereotypes.

Joe Lockard,
English Department,
322 Wheeler Hall,
University of California,
Berkeley, CA 94720.

UNDP press release

Features

The Prince

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan was born on September 9 with a name that means "the most beautiful" in Arabic. The Prince explains the meaning of his name and how it has been a source of pride for him and his family. His Majesty also talks about his childhood and his future plans.

Interview by Maher Attoum

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan, the 10th in line to the throne of Jordan, was born on September 9, 1967. He is the youngest son of King Hussein and Queen Alia. He has a younger brother, Prince Hashem, and a younger sister, Princess Huda. He is currently studying at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the United Kingdom.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan was born in Amman, Jordan. He has a very active and healthy life. He is a member of the Jordanian Olympic Committee and has represented Jordan in several international sports events. He is also a member of the Jordanian Football Federation and has played for the national team.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very talented and accomplished person. He is a skilled athlete and a successful businessman. He is also a very kind and generous person. He is always ready to help others in need and to support the development of his country.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very popular and respected figure in Jordan. He is loved by his people and is a source of pride for his family and his country. He is a true example of a young man who has achieved great success through hard work and dedication.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very brave and courageous person. He is always ready to face any challenge and to stand up for his principles. He is a true leader and a role model for his people.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very intelligent and thoughtful person. He is always looking for ways to improve himself and his country. He is a true visionary and a great leader.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very humble and modest person. He is always ready to listen to others and to accept criticism. He is a true servant of his people and his country.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very loyal and devoted person. He is always ready to sacrifice for his family and his country. He is a true patriot and a great leader.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very brave and courageous person. He is always ready to face any challenge and to stand up for his principles. He is a true leader and a role model for his people.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very intelligent and thoughtful person. He is always looking for ways to improve himself and his country. He is a true visionary and a great leader.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very humble and modest person. He is always ready to listen to others and to accept criticism. He is a true servant of his people and his country.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very loyal and devoted person. He is always ready to sacrifice for his family and his country. He is a true patriot and a great leader.

His Majesty Prince Ali Ben Hassan is a very brave and courageous person. He is always ready to face any challenge and to stand up for his principles. He is a true leader and a role model for his people.

The Prince and the 'Noble People' of the Caucasus

His Royal Highness Prince Ali Ben Hussein set out on horseback on September 9 with a team of fourteen Circassian riders on a journey which was to take them from Jordan to the Caucasus region of Russia. Below the Prince explains the motives behind the trip, his interest in the Circassian culture — a culture that he is keen to preserve — and provides some insight into his relationship with his father, His Majesty King Hussein.

Interview by Maher Attoum
Sigma News Agency

QUESTION: Your Royal Highness, today you are defending the cultural rights of the Circassian mountaineers. Could you tell us who the Circassians are and why are you interested in this issue?

ANSWER: According to legend, when God was creating the earth He carried all the mountains in a bag in order to distribute them across the land. The devil seeing his chance slit a hole in the bottom of the bag and all the mountains fell in one area between the Black Sea and the Caspian. So God made that land the one place in the world where the devil would not be able to penetrate and make its people evil, since life would be hard enough for them as it is.

The North Caucasuses is described by many visitors as Eden itself, with warm rich lowlands followed by majestic forests and alpine pastures, abandoned rivers and lakes, superimposed by eternally snow-capped peaks. These are the Frosty Caucasuses of which Shakespeare sang, and which dwarf the Alps. Mount Elbrus, the tallest mountain in Europe, where legend has it, between its two peaks the Ark rested on its way to Ararat. Kazbek, where Prometheus was chained, known in ancient Greek legend as the Land Of The Golden Fleece, the land of fables and dreams, from which Tolstoy, Lermontov and Pushkin drew their inspiration.

The Circassians are an ancient race, composed of twelve tribes, who have been dwelling in the mountains of the North Caucasus and along the Black Sea coast since time immemorial. Many would-be invaders had found them a terrible foe, Roman Legions, Attila, Genghis Khan, Arabs, Timur and the Persians, who called the Caucasus "Sedi Iskender," or the barrier of Alexander. The mighty conqueror had set out to possess the world and met his first check here. Having never been conquered, the Circassians have managed to preserve their ancient culture without outside influences up until the time of the Russian invasion, that began in the late 18th century and which flamed into a terrible war, which lasted over a hundred years.

The Circassians, freedom-loving and bold, fought desperately and fiercely, earning themselves legendary status and respect throughout Europe and the Middle East. For one hundred years they held all the might of the Czar's armies at bay, preventing them from

colonial expansion and the long-cherished Russian dream of an over-land route to India. It was said that one Circassian is worth ten of anyone else, and their struggle is best described by the great Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov, who wrote in the times of the Russo-Caucasus wars: "Circassian treasure rueful dreams, Circassian hearth is their supreme, but freedom, freedom for the man is more than peace and motherland."

The war lasted until 1864 resulting in the death of over half of the entire Circassian population, and the two great powers of the time, Russia and Turkey, collaborated to cause the forced migration of over half the entire remaining population to the Ottoman Empire. Russia wanted the Circassian land for its emancipated peasants, and Turkey needed fresh blood for its armies in the Balkans. The Circassian expulsion was the largest mass exodus in modern times and another third of them perished along the way from disease and starvation.

It is estimated that if not for the war, Circassians today would number over 25 millions or more, instead of less than six millions spread out in countries all over the world.

Yet, wherever the Circassians went they contributed tremendously to the countries that they now live in. They were the first people to settle in revived modern Amman. When Prince, later King Abdullah, arrived in Trans-Jordan, they welcomed him, and during a rebellion in the early days of the Emirate they camped around his palace to protect him and were then given the honour of being the King's personal guards. Nowadays, they can still be seen guarding the palaces and the Royal Court in their fabulous and romantic costumes. The Circassians have served in every government and military office, and are well-known for their honesty and loyalty. Today there are roughly one hundred thousand Circassians in Jordan, five million in Turkey, 700 hundred thousand in the Caucasus and smaller communities in Israel, Syria, and U.S. and Western Europe.

The Circassians practised civilised behaviour at a time when Europeans were still cave-dwellers. Their culture is extremely rich in poetry, myth, legend, song, dance and music. Their social structure is governed by the "Adugha Khabza," or Circassian etiquette, a set of unwritten rules which emphasise perfect manners, hospitality, honesty, chivalry and respect for elders. They esteem their women and grant them full public freedom and they never practice polygamy or marry anyone even distantly related to them, as all Circassian relatives and neighbours are considered brothers and sisters. Indeed the Circassian's greatest achievement has been the perfection of their own culture.

Nevertheless, due to the fact that they have been separated for nearly one hundred and thirty years, Circassians are finding it increasingly difficult to preserve their language, cultural heritage and are at risk of large scale assimilation, that threatens their very existence as a people.

My interest, therefore, comes from a want to reverse this process and give the Circassians the basic human rights, granted to all peoples of the world; to live together in peace and happiness, practising their own culture, speaking their own language and respected and known by the rest of the world we live in.



HRH Prince Ali Ben Hussein

Q: What are you expecting from your campaign?

A: This campaign is a symbolic beginning of the work to come. The horse-ride is in essence a reverse of the mass exodus that brought the Circassians to Jordan and the diaspora. Circassians of the Caucasus and the diaspora are part of a single ethnic and cultural entity, and uniting these parts is a natural human right. My goals are, therefore, to open the door for any Circassians wishing to return to their homeland, to be able to do so freely, without the complications and problems that they are presently facing due to lack of organisation and barriers posed by people who wish to prevent the spiritual and physical unity of the Circassian nation. In addition, I hope to bring the Circassian issue to the world's attention, so that they can no longer be used as pawns in a chess game, and future bloodshed in the Caucasus, caused by ignorance and neglect, can be avoided.

Q: Are you involved in charity and social work for the Circassian issue?

A: I am president of the Jeel Club for Circassian Culture and Folklore in Jordan, and I am in the process of setting up a Circassian Culture Fund with branches in Israel, Turkey, the United States and the Caucasus, in order to work on and achieve international recognition for Circassians as displaced people and to implement their rights under international law to automatic citizenship in their homeland, as well as the preservation and revival of the Circassian language and to research and

write the common and entire history of the Circassian nation.

I also hope to live in the Caucasus for a year, beginning in January to further study the languages and cultures of the Caucasus and to see that our goals are implemented in the homeland.

Q: How was the reaction of the Circassian mountaineers when you were crossing their villages on horseback with the traditional costumes?

A: It was immensely spiritual and emotional, and their reaction seemed mostly to be of shock and disbelief especially among the elder people, with tears in their eyes as they never dreamt that such a thing could really happen. There was always tremendous joy and pride among the younger generation and the children and much celebration. All of it was immensely satisfying and gave me a sense of euphoria and inner peace. What was really most touching was when members of our team met their relatives and families, whom they had never seen or knew existed, in villages and cities along the way.

Q: Were there any complications or problems building up to the horse-ride or along the route itself?

A: For two years myself and the horse group, who are all Circassian volunteers from Jordan, had been ready to make the journey, but we were faced with continual barriers and obstacles set up by people both in Russia and in Jordan, who did not want the ride and tried their hardest not to make it happen. In fact, we were not granted a visa to enter Russia until we reached Samsun on the Black Sea coast. There was also security concerns: nearing the time of our departure across the Black Sea, we started receiving calls from people telling us that something bad was going to happen and that there would be an attempt on my life. There is also a lot of people who try to portray the Circassians as dangerous people or bandits, something which I know is not true. They are a wonderful hospitable people. Of course I always bear in mind the fact that someone may try an attempt on my life in order to blame it on the Circassians. In any case, we took all the precautions we could and the rest we left up to God and in the end we triumphed, and made the journey the way we wanted, regardless of the people who tried to stop us; that in itself is satisfaction enough. I sincerely believe that when you stand on the side of right and your intentions are good, no one can stop you.

Q: How is your relationship with your father, His Majesty King Hussein? Did he give you any advice, and what was his impression about this trip?

A: If there is such a thing as a Saint in this day and age we live in, it would be my father. He is the wisest, bravest, kindest and most intelligent leader in the world today. But most of all he is the greatest father. He has taken so much care of his children and has tried to give us all that he didn't have in his childhood. But what I cherish most in my life is his advice

and his wishes. My father has always encouraged his children to go out, see the world and work on something that we believe in, not to simply be reliant on him, but to try and make something for ourselves, and I am trying to do just that through my work for the Circassians.

During the trip, when I encountered problems I turned to my father for advice, and he has kept a close eye on everything even while he was undergoing treatment. My loyalty in life is solely to my father and none other, and in the future I will always serve him to the utmost of my ability in whatever form it may be. But till then, he has given me the freedom and the encouragement to make my own mark and follow my own path, and in the end, God willing, I hope to repay my father with the greatest gift I can offer, pride in his son.

Q: How close are you to your sister Princess Haya? Are you a family person?

A: My sister Haya is my pride and joy. She is a living memory of my late mother Queen Alia, through her actions, her character and her beauty. Haya is also someone I admire, for her unfathomable courage, willpower, and desire to realise her dream in the field of show jumping.

Every person has faults and mine are that I'm secretive, not very good at expressing my emotions, and I can never ask for help, so I'm not the best family person. In the past few years, I haven't seen my brothers and sisters, all of whom I love, as much as I would have liked, but they are always in my dreams and prayers, and I constantly look forward to the moments when we are together.

Q: How do you see your future as a king's son and do you feel any responsibility?

A: There are no certainties in life, and fate often has its wicked way with us, but I continue to follow the signs and paths that will eventually lead me to my final destiny whatever it may be. The hardest path is always to follow one's dreams and try to realise them, but at the same time it is the only way to live without regret and at peace with oneself. I'm not a conformist, and I never do what I'm expected to do, rather I always do what I feel is the right thing, to the despair of many.

I feel tremendous responsibility in bearing the Hashemite name, but at the same time I know that it is not the name that makes a person but rather ones work and ones actions.

In Jordan I keep a low profile, and I have tried to stay away from appearing too much in front of cameras, unless it has to do with work, because I believe the average person cares more about feeding his or her family than the fact that prince or princess so and so went here, or opened this or did that. I'm a dreamer, and I have principles that I won't break for anyone. I've found a path to work on for the near future, I have a dream, and I pray to God to give me the courage and perseverance to realise my goal so that I may prove that I am worthy of bearing the title, prince.

Environment

Torrential rains leave nasty legacy in Lake Victoria

Earlier this year, heavy rain caused flooding throughout northern Tanzania, destroying the latrines of many living near Lake Victoria, resulting in contamination of a lake that provides drinking water for some 10 million people.

By Lawi Joel

FEAR IS growing that one of the most important lakes in Africa is becoming contaminated by human faeces.

Lake Victoria's problem had its origins earlier this year when torrential rains caused by the El Nino weather phenomenon hit northern Tanzania. During the rains, many latrines in towns along the lake collapsed in the soggy ground, leaving residents with no alternative but to use the lake as toilet.

Although the rains have stopped, some people are still defecating in the lake.

"Lake Victoria is seriously polluted with faeces," says Joseph Mabula, regional medical officer in the northern Tanzanian province of Mara.

Nearly 10 million people in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania get their drinking water from Lake Victoria.

Much of the blame centres of Kitaji, a suburb of Musoma better known as Lake Kitaji. It's lower than the rest of the lake-side area and is swampy for most of the year. Kitaji resident Doto Kiwango says some people whose latrines collapsed in the rains used the neighbours' toilets, but others relieved themselves in the lake.

"Health officers recently arrested some residents of Kitaji for defecating in the lake and fined them," said Kiwango.

Mabula says he also met out the same punishment to similar offenders.

"Fishermen are now the biggest culprits," says Mabula.

explaining that they defecate in the water while out fishing in the lake.

Peter Silla, a driver with Tanzania Posts and Company in Kitaji, says people relieved themselves in plastic shopping bags commonly known as kenos, which they later dumped on the road or in the lake. This practice was even more prevalent in Nyasoh, an over-crowded, non-surveyed suburb of Musoma.

Zadech Jaboma who works as a watchman at Musoma Secondary School says it could be a messy mistake to kick a stuffed plastic bag lying by the roadside in Nyasoh. "You may find your foot plastered with faeces," he says.

During the El Nino rains, there was a higher sale of plastic bags, especially the kenos, distinguished from other types by their black colour and slick, light feel. Wamatehe Ngere, a 70-year old businessman at the town's central market, says he thought he sold more kenos bags then because food was a problem and more people shopped at the market.

Despite Kitaji's health hazards, people are still building houses there, and the residents refuse to move out, saying that they have nowhere to go. As things are, residents seem destined to remain there much longer, perhaps until another El Nino phenomenon.

The Tanzanian government is too financially handicapped to solve the expensive problem. "The cost of resettling the people is estimated to be Tsh 50 million (Tsh1,000 = \$1.50) and is growing every day," says Mabula.

Kitaji residents aren't the only people in need of resettlement as the El Nino rains increased the size of Lake Victoria in many places. In some areas the lake expanded 10 to

20 metres inland.

It's also proving difficult to eliminate water-borne diseases like cholera and dysentery in the Mara countryside. Residents aren't building toilets, so well and springs — still the main source of drinking water for most people — are becoming contaminated. Despite the presence of cholera, some residents are not strict about washing their hands or boiling their drinking water, which has aggravated the problem. "If you tell them to boil the water before drinking it, they say that boiled water is not sweet," Mabula says.

He says even urban residents of Musoma live in constant threat of a cholera outbreak because the town lacks a central sewage system. "That has contributed to why cholera has lingered on in the town for so long," he notes. This has left the town with chlorination as the sole way to purify its water.

However, while Musoma is cursing El Nino rains for the damages, people of Dodoma, the centrally situated seat of government, wish the rains went on much longer.

The central railway line — running the length of the country from Dar es Salaam in the south-east by the Indian Ocean to Mwanza town by Lake Victoria in the north — was damaged by the rains. The only way to get from the northern towns to Dar es Salaam was to travel by road to Dodoma, then catch a bus to the city.

"We made good business then because many travellers spent the night here before travelling on," says one businessman who runs a hotel in the town. Dodoma's guest houses and hotels now hardly have any customers.

— Gemini News

Indian tribes on 'warpath' to end buffalo 'genocide'

By Gerard Aziakou
Agence France Presse

WITH THE backing of wildlife conservationists, U.S. Indian tribes are stepping up their drive to end what they see as the indiscriminate slaughter of Yellowstone National Park's wild buffalo.

Over the past five years, some 3,000 buffalo (bison) have been killed by game wardens as they migrate into Montana to escape the harsh winter conditions in neighbouring Wyoming's pristine national park.

The slaughter coincides with efforts by Indian tribes to revive the buffalo, an animal with which Native Americans share a strong spiritual and metaphysical connection.

The free-roaming Yellowstone bison are being killed to prevent them from infecting Montana's cattle with brucellosis, a cow disease in which a bacterium causes the infected animal to abort its first calf.

But Native Americans and the National Wildlife Federation charge that the buffalo are being slaughtered even before being tested for the disease and say there is no evidence that brucellosis can be transmitted from buffalo to cattle.

"It's genocide," said Mark Heckert, executive director of the Inter-Tribal Cooperative (ITBC), a coalition of Indian tribes that is coordinating the campaign to secure fundamental changes in the management of excess Yellowstone buffalo.

Yellowstone officials, acting at the instigation of Montana's powerful cattle ranchers, are using slaughter as a management technique to deal with excess buffalo, ITBC says.

Wildlife activists and Indian tribes want Yellowstone to establish migration corridors and acquire additional winter ranges on public lands adjacent to the park where buffalo could roam freely up to the carrying capacity of these lands.

They also want an effective brucellosis vaccination programme inside the park and are demanding that excess buffalo be relocated onto Indian reservations or public lands across the country.

"The U.S. government has been managing these animals for 150 years and they have been doing a hell of a bad job," Heckert said in Rapid City, South Dakota.

In scenes reminiscent of Kevin Costner's "Dances with Wolves," 600 buffalo roam freely here across the ranges of South Dakota's Oglala Sioux Pine Ridge Reservation near the Nebraska border.

"We're expecting 225 more heads from the (nearby) Badlands National Park within the next three weeks," said Clayton Grasham, a reservation official.

On the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation some 500 kilometres to the north-east, tribal member and ITBC's first president Jeff DuBray manages 1,000 bison on 20,000 acres near the Missouri River.

"The buffalo represents everything for us. It is the very essence of what we're all about," he told AFP. "If we can restore the buffalo, we can restore our tribal culture." The systematic destruction of the bison — which dropped from an estimated 60 million in the early 1800s to fewer than 500 in the wild by 1890 — was the key to the subjugation of the Indians as European settlers poured in and turned the grasslands of the fertile plains into farmlands.

Bison provided Indians not only with food, clothing and utensils but also played a central role in religious and social beliefs.



Where the buffalo still roams — just (file photo)

Six years ago, only a handful of tribes in Montana and North and South Dakota were raising a total of 2,500 buffalo. Today, 35 of the ITBC's 47-member tribes have started herds on native lands.

"Now, we have around 10,000 buffalo and potentially we could have five million," Heckert told AFP.

"The animal is ecologically suited to the Great Plains. Two years ago, we had a terrible winter out here. Ranchers lost 250,000 cows in North and South Dakota. But the buffalo survived," he said.

Several Indian tribes see the resurgence of the bison as the key to the economic revitalisation of their impoverished reservations, which are beset by high unemployment as well as rampant malnutrition and diabetes.

"Being wild animals, buffalo are

tremendously healthy animals. They are not injected with steroids or antibiotics. They eat only native grass and produce high-protein meat that is low in fat and cholesterol," Heckert said.

The bison business is also very lucrative (\$3,000 per head, compared with less than \$2,000 for a cow), and with cattle prices in a freefall, a growing number of white ranchers are switching to raising bison, according to South Dakota's Farm Bureau.

But Indian officials see the buffalo as a sacred animal which should be treated as a wildlife species rather than a commodity.

"People are taking the cattle model and raising buffalo as cows. They are domesticating the buffalo. This could destroy their economic viability," Heckert warned.

[illegible]

A review of news from the Arabic Press

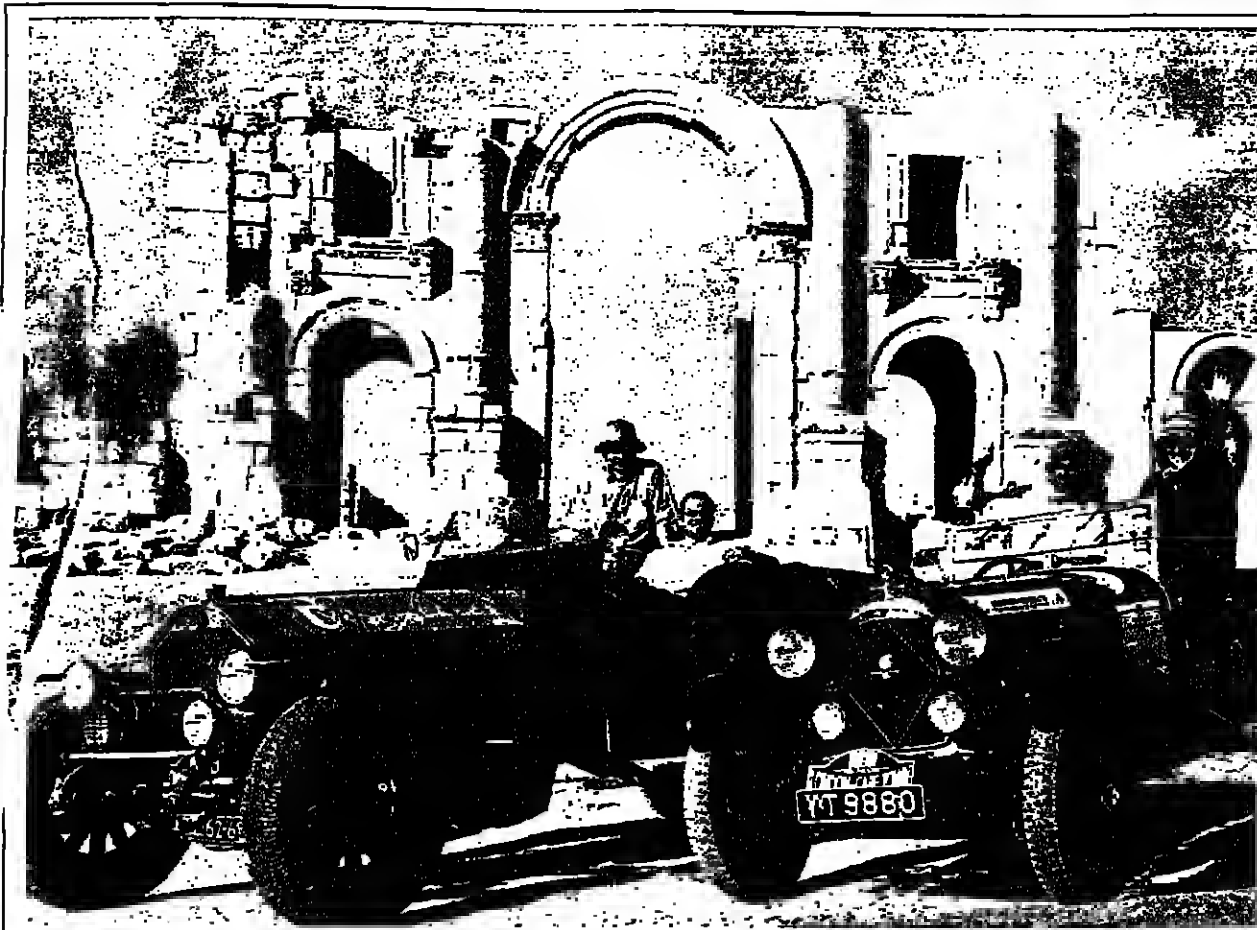
**"Now you can rent
or buy offices
with long-term financing"**

OWNATI CENTER
Financing

For further information Tel. 4645324/5, Fax 4645326

FIFA delegation to inspect World Cup preparations

[illegible]



Ernest Krupob and Bert Egyteren from Amsterdam on their American Le Mans Simplex model 1917 (L) and David Ayre and Chris Moore from Britain on their Lagonda model 1927, wave to crowds during the leg of the London-Cape Town rally, at the ancient Roman city of Jerash Monday. The rally started from London October 25 and will finish in Cape Town on December 14 (Reuters photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Snyder wins Quebec final

QUEBEC CITY (R) — Seventh seed Tara Snyder made the most of her first appearance in a WTA Tour final by defeating fifth-seeded fellow American Chanda Rubin 4-6 6-4 7-6 (8-6) on Sunday in the \$164,250 Bell Challenge. The 21-year-old Snyder earned \$27,000 for the victory. After finishing 1997 ranked 113th, the 21-year-old Snyder has vaulted to 45th, thanks to quarter-final showings in Amelia Island and Madrid, and is sure to move up in next week's WTA rankings. Last year, Snyder won her first professional title at a Challenger event in Delray Beach, Fla., and in 1995 won the U.S. Open juniors singles title. This year, she advanced to the second round at all four Grand Slam tournaments. Appearing in her first final of the year, Rubin was gunning for her second career singles title, having won in Linz, Austria, last year. The 22-year-old Rubin continued her career frustration in finals, posting her sixth runner-up finish. A former top-10 player, Rubin currently is ranked 38th in the world. At the 1996 Lipton Championships, she suffered a broken wrist which sidelined her for seven months. Earlier that year, Rubin advanced to her first Grand Slam semifinal at the Australian Open.

Barcelona plans in crisis

BARCELONA (AFP) — Barcelona coach Louis Van Gaal said Monday his defensive plans were in crisis before Wednesday's Champions League clash with Bayern Munich. Van Gaal said an injury to Dutchman Michael Reiziger at the weekend meant he could only count on first-choice Sergi and Fernandez Abellardo at the back for the Group D home encounter. Another Dutchman, midfielder Philip Cocu, or the inexperienced Albert Celades, another midfielder, may have to be drafted into the middle of defence to plug the gap. Barcelona will also be without Luis Enrique. He was also injured during Saturday's 4-1 win against Real Sociedad and is expected to be out for a month. Bayern beat Barcelona 1-0 when the sides met in Germany last month.

Chinese striker to join Crystal Palace

BEIJING (AFP) — China's first division league top scorer Hao Haidong will join England's first division side Crystal Palace next season, the official news agency Xinhua reported Monday. Hao, who scored 18 goals this season for league winners Dalian, will join Dalian teammate Sun Jihai and Shanghai's Fan Zhiyi at the London club, the news agency said. It provided no details of Hao's contract with Crystal Palace, where Fan has a four-year contract and Sun has a two-year contract. Two other Chinese football stars are already playing in Europe, with Liaoning striker Li Jinyun playing with Nantes and Beijing striker Yang Chen with Frankfurt.

Olympic champion to take part in Asian Games

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese national table tennis champion Seiko Iseki, a former Chinese Olympic champion, has been given the go-ahead to take part in the Bangkok Asian Games in December.

Iseki will be Japan's best medal hope in the table tennis after women's six-time national champion Chire Koyama had to withdraw from the Asian Games because of a right elbow problem.

"We already received approval from the Chinese side and the Olympic Committee of Asia (OCA) unofficially," said a Japanese Olympic Committee official on Monday.

"It's not 100 per cent yet, but it's almost certain. We are just waiting for an official confirmation by the OCA before making the announcement, because anything could happen," he added. Iseki, better known as Seoul Olympics doubles champion Wei Qingguang, took on Japanese nationality in July 1997 and won his adopted country's national championships in December.

Iseki, 36, was named to spearhead the table tennis squad, but had to wait approval from China's Olympic committee according to the rules which set out that permission must be given if an athlete wishes to represent a new country within three years of changing nationality.

Iseki made a successful comeback to an international scene at the Asian championships in Osaka, where he shocked China's young hope Ma Lin, and Atlanta Olympics dual gold medalist Liu Guoliang.

His giant-killing run was ended by World No. 6 Wang Liqin in the final, but his effort earned him 23rd place in the world rankings.

"I couldn't believe that I received cheers from so many spectators. It was when I really felt I had to do my very best for Japan. I hope I can contribute to my country's success," Iseki said at the time.

Packers dominate 49ers

WASHINGTON (AFP) — With four Super Bowls, San Francisco was the National Football League's team of the 1980s, but the Green Bay Packers seem determined to deny the 49ers that title in the 1990s.

Brett Favre threw for 279 yards and three touchdowns and Antonio Freeman caught seven passes for a career-high 193 yards as the Packers defeated the 49ers for the fifth straight time Sunday, 36-22.

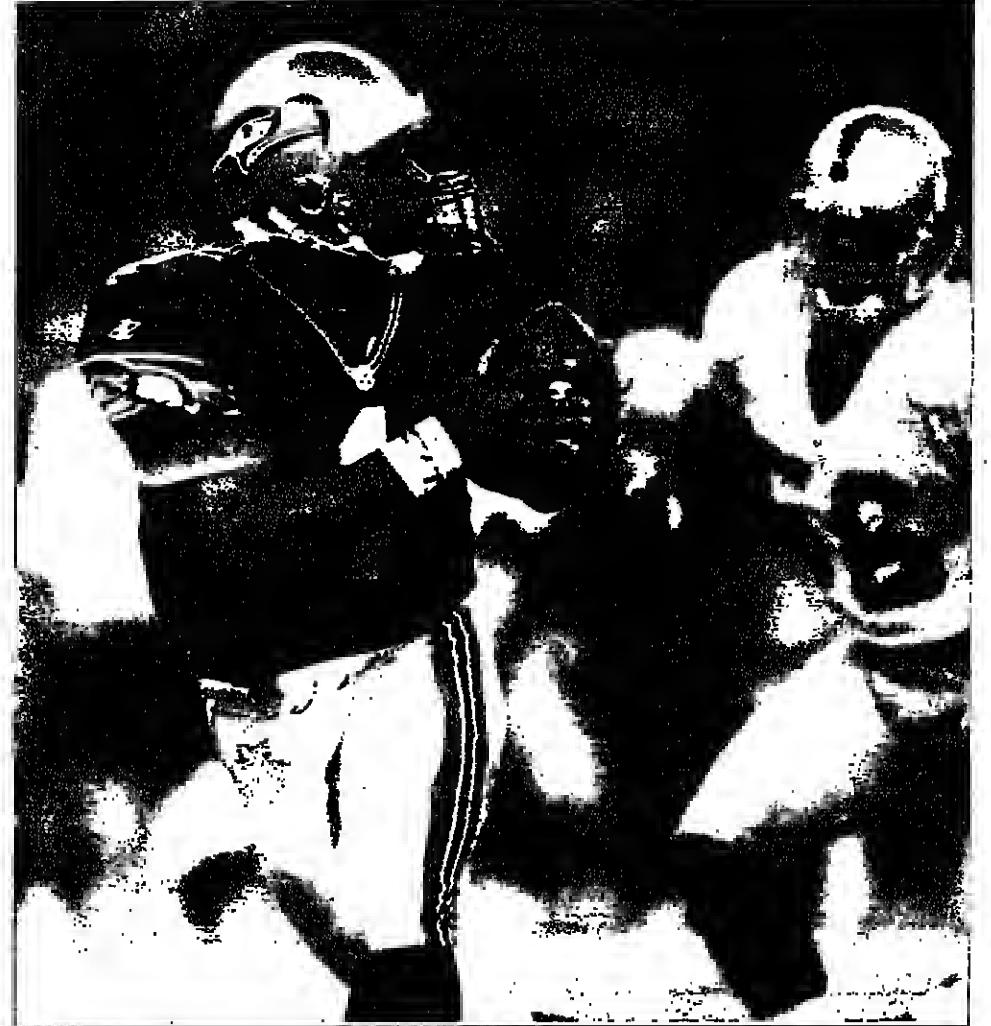
Defensive end Reggie White had three of Green Bay's nine sacks as the Packers continued their dominance of quarterback Steve Young. Travis Jervey rushed 17 times for a career-high 95 yards and a touchdown.

"When you can bring four guys like they do, they can put pressure on us and we have to go with the short routes," Young said. "We have pass plays designed to get downfield on seven-step drops. But I'm not sure with their rush that we were really able to get the ball into their secondary."

Young completed 24-of-39 passes for 186 yards, a touchdown and an interception as San Francisco had its three-game winning streak snapped. The 49ers have been eliminated from the playoffs by Green Bay in each of the last three seasons and Young is 0-8 lifetime against the Packers. The loss dropped the 49ers into a tie with the Atlanta Falcons atop the NFC West.

Favre completed 15-of-28 passes and threw three interceptions, but the three-time MVP began and finished strong. On the first play from scrimmage Favre rolled to the right and threw back to the left sideline where he found Freeman for an 80-yard touchdown.

Young connected with a 12-yard touchdown pass to Jerry Rice in the first quarter, the 80th of the duo's career. That broke the NFL mark held by Miami quarterback Dan Marino and wide receiver Mark



Seattle Seahawks' Warren Moon, (1), who went 16 for 16 in passing in the first half against the Oakland Raiders, looks for a completion in the Kingdom in Seattle. Moving in on Moon is Oakland's Pat Swilling (56) (AP photo)

Clayton.

Young also scored with a one-yard run in the second quarter, his 41st career rushing TD breaking the record by quarterbacks held by Jack Kemp.

The Packers moved within one game of the first-place Minnesota Vikings in the NFC Central.

The Vikings' undefeated season wilted in the heat of Tampa Bay. Powered by a punishing ground game, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers remained perfect at Raymond James Stadium while ending Minnesota's quest for perfection with a 27-24 victory.

Mike Alstott rushed for 128 yards and the winning touchdown on 19 carries. Warrick Dunn added 115 and a score on 18 rushes as Tampa Bay ran for a team-record 246 yards and had

two 100-yard rushers for the first time in franchise history.

The Vikings appeared to tire in the fourth quarter, when they were outscored 10-0. Randall Cunningham completed 21-of-25 passes for 291 yards and a pair of touchdowns to Jake Reed, but he had an interception and was sacked on Minnesota's final two possessions.

Minnesota's defeat left Super Bowl champion Denver as the only undefeated team in the NFL.

Terrell Davis continued to run rampant with 149 yards and two touchdowns, including the game-winning score with 58 seconds to play, as the Broncos beat Cincinnati 33-26.

Denver became the fifth team to start 8-0 and the first since the 1991 Washington Redskins

since the NFL schedule went to 16 games in 1978.

The Carolina Panthers and Washington Redskins breathed sighs of relief, each capturing its first win of the season. The Panthers downed new Orleans 31-17 and the Redskins beat the New York Giants 21-14.

The Buffalo Bills climbed into a three-way tie atop the AFC East with a 30-24 victory over the Miami Dolphins.

The Patriots joined Miami and Buffalo in first place with a 21-16 victory over Indianapolis.

In other games, Jacksonville beat Baltimore 45-19, Atlanta beat St. Louis 37-15, Tennessee defeated Pittsburgh 41-31, Oakland beat Seattle 31-18, New York Jets beat Kansas City 20-17 and Arizona beat Detroit 17-15.

Inter take Ronaldo to Moscow, leave Baggio

MILAN (AFP) — Inter Milan flew to Moscow for a European Champions League tie against Spartak on Monday with Ronaldo but without Roberto Baggio.

Inter are pinning their hopes on the Brazilian after he scored one and made another as a second-half substitute in Sunday's 3-2 defeat to Bari.

Ronaldo should line up with Chile's Ivan Zamorano as Baggio is still nursing a tendon injury and Frenchman Youri Djorkaeff is out after pulling a thigh muscle against Spartak here last month.

Inter will also be without suspended Dutch midfielder Aron Winter.

Team coach Gigi Simoni goes into the tie facing a stark ultimatum from club president Massimo Moratti: "Beat Spartak on Wednesday and AC Milan on Sunday or you're sacked."

Inter may have lost their last three Italian league games, but Simoni is counting on the better form his men have shown in Europe. Along with holders Real Madrid and Spartak, they are one of three sides on six points in Group C. Wednesday's meeting will be their fourth in a year with the Russians, Inter having won each of the previous three 2-1.

Spartak's players, however, will be determined to end that run - particularly after being given a dressing down by chief coach and president Oleg Romansev.

He was furious after his team, with the league title already won, lost 3-1 to Novorossiysk in their final domestic game of the season.

"Our players had no right to play the way they did," said Romansev. "They had no right to show their indifference in the match even if it counted for nothing."

FURNISHED DELUXE SEMI-VILLA FOR RENT

At the best location in Sweifeth. Suitable for diplomats. Area: 450 sq.m. Consists of 4 bedrooms (one master), large salon, large dining room, fully equipped kitchen 3 bathrooms, garage, independent garden, central heating and telephone.

Please contact owner at Tel.: 5815970

Note: Please no intermediaries

ROOF FOR RENT

3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, huge kitchen and living room, very spacious salon and dining area, small room as an office and telephone line. You must see it to like it. Location: 7th Circle, behind the Music Box, very close to C-Town.

For more information call Jamal at: 079/535600.

FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

Consists of 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, salon, dining, L-shaped sitting room, telephone, central heating, air conditioning, first floor. Location: Shamsiyya, near Parkside SAS Hotel (formerly known as Philadelphia). Annual rent. Please call Tel.: 5664839 from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

FURNISHED FLAT FOR RENT

Area: 250 sq.m. With unique features.

Excellent location in Um Utheina.

Please call: 079/539927

FOR SALE

OPPORTUNITY FOR INVESTORS, LAWYERS OR INTL COMPANIES

6-floor office building with 5-star finishing. Top location within walking distance to the Central Court, Abdali Bus Station, King Abdullah Mosque.

Building consisting of: 4-floor offices (each floor 4 offices with a total of 300 sq.m.) 1 floor parking 1 floor storage

If interested call Mobile: 079-538849 or Fax: 569260

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM KIRSCH
©1998 Yabuta Media Services, Inc.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ A 8

♥ 10 8 4 2

♦ 8 6 2

♣ A Q 5 2

WEST

♠ 8 6 2

♥ 9 8 6 3

♦ K 5 3

♣ 10 7

EAST

♠ J 10 7 4 3

♥ K 7

♦ A 4

♣ 3 9 4 3

SOUTH

♠ K Q 6

♥ A J

♦ Q J 10 9 7

♣ K 8 6

The bidding:

SOUTH

INT

20

Pass

Pass

WEST

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

NORTH

2♠

3NT

Pass

Pass

EAST

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♣

"Strange hand," remarked the

ibitzer. "By making a play all the

tricks would say is wrong,

"never can come to one more trick

he hand that caused this enig-

comment occurred during a

ever bridge game at the club.

a Stayman inquiry had elicit-

e information that South had

not have a four-card major. North

went directly to the no-trump game.

West led a fourth-best heart.

East rose with the king and, since

the combined J 10 provided a sec-

ond stopper, declarer won with the

ace. The queen of diamonds ran to

East's ace, the heart return was

won by the queen and the return of

the nine of hearts forced out the

ten. Declarer led a diamond to the

ten, but West won with the king

and cashed two more heart tricks

for a one-trick set.

The hand would have passed into

oblivion had it not been for the

kibitzer's remark. Subsequent analysis

showed this was one of those rare

instances when a kibitzer was

right.

Suppose South were to let East's

king hold the first heart, then win

the continuation. If East, on

winning the ace of diamonds,

has a heart to return, the suit is

splitting 4-3 and declarer has no

problem. As the cards lie, East is

out of hearts and, as a result,

declarer gains a tempo. South can

win any return, force out the king

of diamonds and, since the ten of

hearts is still a stopper, come to

nine tricks without the defenders

being able to do anything about it.

C-TOWN
Department stores

TOMORROW & DAY AFTER TOMORROW SALE

20% OFF

On Everything You Purchase From The Second Floor

Unprecedented Hamas threat prompts PNA to blame Iran

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Hamas officials insisted Monday that an unprecedented threat against Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was not the movement's policy as Palestinian officials said they had evidence that Iranian-backed hardliners were behind it.

"There will be no internal confrontations," Musa Abu Marzouq, the former head of Hamas's political bureau, told reporters here, insisting that the movement had not abandoned its policy of coexistence with the authority despite a Palestinian police crackdown on its activists in recent days.

But he added that the movement was paying a heavy price for its continued forbearance.

"It is we who are paying the price of our position and of our dialogue with the Palestinian Authority," the Hamas official said.

Abu Marzouq was responding to a statement sent to news organisations in occupied Jerusalem Sunday from the armed wing of Hamas, warning that it would no longer tolerate the wave of arrests launched by the Palestinian police after Thursday's suicide bombing in the Gaza Strip.

The statement said the repression against Hamas would lead its members "to refuse the orders of their leadership and turn their weapons intentionally towards the security forces of the authority."

"There will no more be room for patience or self-control,"

the statement warned.

A Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip also disowned the warning Sunday.

"The statement published today did not come from Hamas and consequently was not issued by any military or political wing of the movement," said Ismail Abu Shanab, a prominent moderate within the movement.

He insisted the statement went completely against Hamas's policy of avoiding divisions in Palestinian or Muslim ranks.

The warning prompted the Palestinian leadership to blame a hardline Iranian-backed faction within Hamas both for the unprecedented threat of inter-Palestinian violence and for Thursday's bombing in which one Israeli soldier was killed.

"We in the Palestinian Authority have information, recently confirmed, that there is an Iranian element within Hamas which is behind these announcements and other recent operations," Tayeb Abdul Rahim, secretary-general to the Palestinian cabinet, told AFP.

He said the threat was part of Tehran's plans to sabotage implementation of the latest U.S.-brokered land-for-peace agreement Arafat signed with Israel last month.

"The Iranian faction within Hamas receives money and training from Iran and is acting on instructions from Iran aimed at destabilising Palestinian society and pre-

venting Israeli withdrawals from Palestinian land," he said.

His remarks came after Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei fiercely attacked Arafat as a "traitor and a lackey of the Zionists" for signing last month's accord.

"This wretched man and traitor who deems himself the representative of the Palestinian people does not even deserve to be a member of the Palestinian movement," Khamenei said in the fiercest attack on Arafat by an Iranian official in well over a year.

But Abdul Rahim insisted that even if Iran was backing a hardline faction within Hamas outside the leadership's control, the movement still bore the ultimate responsibility.

"The leadership of Hamas carries complete responsibility for actions carried out by elements within the organisation," he said.

And in an interview Monday, Palestinian police chief General Ghazi Jabali said he had ordered his men to shoot at any Hamas activists who approach them.

In the interview with the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Jabali said his forces' crackdown against Hamas was completely justified by Thursday's bombing.

"We are not afraid of anyone," he said. "We are not afraid of anyone who has ordered his men to shoot at any Hamas activists who approach them."

He said the threat was part of Tehran's plans to sabotage implementation of the latest U.S.-brokered land-for-peace agreement Arafat signed with Israel last month.

"The Iranian faction within Hamas receives money and training from Iran and is acting on instructions from Iran aimed at destabilising Palestinian society and pre-



An Israeli bulldozer clears the ground for a public building in this West Bank Jewish settlement Monday on the same hilltop where a new neighbourhood of 200 housing units is to be established. Palestinians say the housing project is a violation of their recently signed interim accord with the Jewish state. In the background are some of the settlement mobile homes and older neighbourhoods (Reuters photo)

Clashes erupt over Jerusalem settlement

TEL AVIV (AP) — In a clash over Israeli construction in traditionally Arab east Jerusalem, Israeli police scuffled Monday with a senior Palestinian official and clubbed his bodyguards.

Three Palestinians were injured, including two who were hospitalised.

The disputed site is a four-acre plot owned by U.S. millionaire Irving Moskowitz in Ras Al Amoud, a Palestinian neighbourhood just outside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City.

Moskowitz plans to build 132 homes for Jews at the site. The government has approved the construction and recently allowed settlers working with

Moskowitz to erect a fence around the property.

On Monday, Faisal Hussein, the senior Palestinian National Authority (PNA) official in occupied Jerusalem, arrived at the site, ringed by several bodyguards, to try and stop the work.

Some 80 police officers blocked Hussein and his supporters.

The two sides began pushing and shoving, with the bodyguards clinging to Hussein to protect him. At one point, officers took a guard into a chokehold and wrestled him to the ground. The Palestinian screamed in pain as officers pushed him down.

"We are here protecting our city. We're here defend-

ing the future of our rights here," Hussein said.

The Palestinians want to establish their capital in Arab east Jerusalem, the sector Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war. The final status of the city is to be determined in negotiations on a permanent peace agreement that have not yet begun.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, denied a report in the Israeli Haaretz daily that he had given the United States to understand that there would not be a substantial expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu said Israel would stick to its policy, which has been to allow the

natural growth of settlements.

"Contrary to the reports, I did not commit to any changes in our policy," Netanyahu told reporters.

The Israeli group Peace Now, which opposes settlement building, found allocations for settlement and road building in the West Bank amounting to \$114 million (483 million Israeli shekels) in the 1998 state budget now being considered by Israel's parliament.

In the Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron, construction crews continued Monday to build roads and lay pipelines for a new neighbourhood of 200 apartments, said the mayor of Kiryat Arba, Zvi Katzover.

Iraqi Kurdish leader to arrive in Ankara

ANKARA (AFP) — Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani will arrive in Ankara Tuesday for talks on the recently inked deal for peace in Kurdish areas of northern Iraq, a Turkish diplomatic source said Monday.

Barzani, who heads the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), will meet Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and officials from the foreign ministry, he said.

The source said that rival Iraqi Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani, of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the other signatory to the peace deal, was expected to visit Turkey later.

The two Kurdish leaders would hold separate meetings with Turkish officials, he said.

The KDP and PUK, whose clashes have left more than 3,000 people dead since 1994, concluded the U.S.-sponsored peace accord in Washington in September, much to Turkey's annoyance.

Under the accord the two sides, who fell out in 1994 over the distribution of customs duties levied at the

Turkish border — the region's main source of revenue — agreed to set up a transitional power-sharing government to pave the way for elections for a regional assembly in summer 1999.

Turkey has expressed reservations about the agreement, in whose preparation it did not participate, charging it is a step towards the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in the region.

Both Washington and northern Iraqi leaders have denied Ankara's accusations.

Ankara fears that such a Kurdish state in northern Iraq, which has been outside Baghdad's control since shortly after the 1991 Gulf war, will spawn support for the longstanding rebellion of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in southeastern Turkey.

More than 30,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the 14-year conflict.

Since May 1997, the KDP has helped Turkey to attack PKK rear bases in northern Iraq. Barzani's group controls Iraq's northern border with Turkey.

UAE to start Iraq ferry but without cars

DUBAI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates hopes to launch a ferry service to sanctions-hit Iraq on Saturday but probably without cars because it has failed to secure U.N. authorisation, the operators said Monday.

"The boat will head for Umm Qasr [in southern Iraq] on Saturday, but we have not yet got a green light from the United Nations to transport cars," said Mohammed Hamdan Al Shamsi, general manager of Naif Marine Services. He told AFP that the Jabal Ali-1 would leave without cars if U.N. authorisation did not come through on time. But Shamsi also cautioned that the ferry, originally set to sail at the end of October, could be further delayed.

The Jabal Ali-1, which can carry 550 passengers and 220 cars, has a piano bar, a night club and sun deck. It aims to attract Gulf businessmen.

Sailing once a week, it will ease the international isolation of Iraq, whose only transportation link to the outside world since 1990 has been the 950-kilometre highway between Baghdad and Amman.

Rabbi urges settlers to obey Israeli evacuation orders

TEL AVIV (AP) — Warning that all settlements could be lost, a West Bank rabbi is calling on settlers to obey government orders, even if it means leaving parts of the West Bank.

"It is absolutely forbidden to engage in a violent struggle," writes Rabbi Yoel Bin Nun in the latest issue of the settler magazine "Nekuda," due to be published this week.

Bin Nun is a spokesman for moderate settlers and critical of hard-liners who advocate resistance against Israeli government decisions they do not accept. In the past he has needed bodyguards after his life was threatened by extremists.

"Nekuda" is read by settlers throughout the West Bank and Gaza. In his article, Bin Nun calls on rabbinical authorities in the West Bank to issue religious rulings requiring set-

tlers to follow instructions of Israeli police or soldiers, including orders to evacuate "a road, a hill, an area."

Otherwise, he warns, "we will not have the ability even to defend existing settlements" from evacuation in a future peace agreement, arguing that only consensus, not confrontation, can save the settlements.

In the past, West Bank rabbis have issued rulings and opinions justifying resistance against evacuation of settlements. Surveys show that thousands of Israelis are prepared to resist violently.

Bin Nun demands that settler leaders and rabbis draw "red lines," allowing demonstrations but forbidding all violence, physical and verbal, and following orders from Israeli police and soldiers "immediately, with no delay or hesitation."

Baghdad warns Prague over U.S.-funded radio

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Baghdad warned Prague on Monday that its hosting of the production studios for a controversial new U.S.-funded radio service to Iraq could damage relations.

"The establishment of an anti-Baghdad radio is a negative development which could have an impact on future economic and trade ties," Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf told the official news agency INA.

Radio Free Iraq, whose programmes are produced by the studios of the U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) in Prague, started broadcasts on Friday.

The radio's director, David Newton, a former U.S. ambassador to Iraq, made clear its programming would focus on democracy, free speech and human rights as well as news about Iraq.

"Under the dictatorship of President Saddam Hussein, people in Iraq never have a

chance to hear about these issues," he told visitors to the station's web site.

The first broadcasts Friday lasted half an hour, but managers said they soon planned to expand the broadcasts to an hour a day and eventually to six hours daily, in Kurdish languages as well as Arabic.

Alongside Radio Free Iraq, RFE/RL started producing programmes for a new service to Iran which also started Friday, prompting an angry response from Tehran as well.

"The content of what is broadcast by the radio is not consistent with the traditionally friendly relations between Iran and the Czech Republic," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi warned last month.

Earlier this year, there was some question about whether the Czech Republic's new government, which took office after June elections, would continue to back the broadcasts.

'Jordan's ties with Syria on the mend'

(Continued from page 1)

Jordan was attempting to "Judaize" its people and that Jordan had obstructed Saudi army from crossing into the Kingdom to aid Syria in defence of the Golan Heights during the Syrian-Egyptian war against Israel in 1973.

Tlass was also reported as saying that Jordan would become the alternative homeland to the Palestinians and that Jordan had also become part of the Turkish-Israeli strategic alliance.

Jordan retaliated with an official denouncement of Tlass' statement, and daily newspapers carried a number of articles and commentaries criticising Tlass' allegations. The government also revealed that some 400 Jordanians are missing after crossing into Syrian territory or are being held in Syrian jails, prompting families of the

missing and jailed to wage a campaign for their release.

"We have not escalated [tensions]," said Judeh. "Neither through the media nor in any other way. We have simply responded to those statements. But we find that any step Jordan takes receives criticism. We hope that this will stop."

In spite of the saber rattling, however, Jordan and Syria have maintained contacts at the highest levels. Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai met Syrian Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam during a trip to South Africa last month, while Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib handed on a memorandum inquiring about the fate of Jordanian prisoners to his Syrian counterpart Farouk Al Sharaf during an Arab League meeting in Cairo in early October.

Iran ends manoeuvres on border with Afghanistan

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran held the final phase of much-publicised military manoeuvres on the Afghan border on Monday and said it would keep troops in the highly sensitive area to combat drug smuggling and "maintain security."

The manoeuvres, which officials said involved an unprecedented 200,000 men from the army, air force and marines, ended at noon on Monday with intensive aerial and artillery bombardments of "mock enemy targets."

Jet fighters, helicopters and tanks, many dating from the former U.S.-equipped Imperial Iranian Army, took part in the exercises held over an area of 50,000-square kilometres that included Lake Hamoun near Iran's eastern border with Afghanistan.

The wargames, dubbed Zulfaqr-2, had been in preparation since September amid extreme tensions with neighbouring Afghanistan following the murder of nine Iranian diplomats and a journalist by the

extremist Sunni Taliban militia who control more than 90 per cent of the country.

The Iranians were murdered on Aug. 8, when the Taliban captured the city of Mazar-e-Sharif from Iranian-backed opposition forces.

Iran demanded the capture and punishment of the murderers and massed troops near the border, threatening war to back its demands.

Manoeuvres were postponed in early October following negotiations between U.N. Afghan envoy Lakhdar Brahimi and the Taliban which led to the release of a number of Iranians held in Afghanistan and helped ease tensions.

But relations have remained on hold with Iran rejecting a proposed meeting between Iranian and Taliban officials until the murderers of the diplomats have been brought to justice.

Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said last week that Iran still "reserves the right to use force" to ensure justice is done.

Iran has used the manoeuvres to display its military capabilities to its hostile neighbours and permanently reinforce its military presence in the region.

Though the foreign press and observers were denied access, the manoeuvres were highly publicised, with the state broadcasting organisation providing massive coverage. Highlights of the exercises have been shown on television accompanied by rousing national songs.

Army commander Major-General Ali Shahbazi attended a field parade of selected units on Sunday, warning that the armed forces would "nip enemy plots in the bud" and would "not permit enemies to dare commit aggression against our land."

He added that the manoeuvres were more generally "part of the army's mission to check the flow of drugs and smuggling of goods and to prevent border aggression," for which reason troops will remain in the border region.

"The manoeuvres are not impor-

tant by themselves, the main aim is to maintain security in the region," he said adding that some troops will remain and cooperate with Pakistani border patrols "to check drug smugglers and bandits."

Tehran has repeatedly accused the Taliban of producing and smuggling drugs through Iran.

Iran's southeastern desert regions are the front line of an ongoing battle against drug dealers and smugglers, who often inflict heavy casualties against law enforcement agents and anti-drug forces.

The Islamic republic accuses the Taliban of fanaticism and "genocide" against other groups, and continues to recognise the ousted government of Burhanuddin Rabbani as the legal government of Afghanistan.

President Mohammad Khatami said Sunday that "what the Taliban are doing in the name of Islam is a danger for the whole region." He reiterated support for a broad-based Afghan government including all ethnic and religious groups.

tant by themselves, the main aim is to maintain security in the region," he said adding that some troops will remain and cooperate with Pakistani border patrols "to check drug smugglers and bandits."

Tehran has repeatedly accused the Taliban of producing and smuggling drugs through Iran.

Iran's southeastern desert regions are the front line of an ongoing battle against drug dealers and smugglers, who often inflict heavy casualties against law enforcement agents and anti-drug forces.

The Islamic republic accuses the Taliban of fanaticism and "genocide" against other groups, and continues to recognise the ousted government of Burhanuddin Rabbani as the legal government of Afghanistan.

President Mohammad Khatami said Sunday that "what the Taliban are doing in the name of Islam is a danger for the whole region." He reiterated support for a broad-based Afghan government including all ethnic and religious groups.

Final police report on Diana crash almost complete

PARIS (AFP) — Police Monday handed over to a French investigating magistrate two secret reports on the crash that caused the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, and her companion Dodi Fayed. A third report on the August 31, 1997 crash is yet to be handed to investigating magistrate Herve Stephan, who is in charge of the case, before any judicial follow-up can take place. Judicial sources refused to divulge the contents of the reports but said the first concerned the Mercedes 280 S. The second report touches on the slightly higher than average amount of carboxyhaemoglobin found in the chauffeur's blood. The as-yet incomplete final report concerns the cause of death, and in the case of Diana, details on the emergency treatment she was given on the spot as well as on the way to hospital.

Lollobrigida robbed at Munich hotel

MUNICH (AP) — Thieves at a Munich hotel stole a bag from Gina Lollobrigida containing \$18,000 worth of jewellery, but the Italian actress was more upset about losing two notebooks that contained private address, and business cards that were inside. The 71-year-old Lollobrigida had checked out of a luxury hotel Sunday and was waiting in the lobby for a taxi to the airport when the theft occurred.

Domingo to be named head of L.A. Opera

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Placido Domingo will take over as artistic director and co-manager of the L.A. Opera in 2000 while keeping his duties as head of Washington Opera, one-third of the Three Tenors, will replace General Director Peter Hemmings when he retires in June 2000, the Los Angeles Times reported. A formal announcement was expected later Monday. Domingo is now the artistic adviser and principal guest conductor for the L.A. Opera. He will become its artistic director, sharing oversight of the company with a yet-to-be-named manager.

Nothing can detain Will Smith

NEW YORK (AP) — Will Smith will not be deterred. "I see people all the time, who are better rappers than me, better actors than me, better looking and stronger than me," Smith says in the November issue of Premiere magazine. "But, my ace in the hole is my, dangerously obsessive drive, you know? I'm a terminator. I absolutely, positively will not stop until I win." Smith stars in the upcoming espionage thriller "Enemy of the State," with Oscar winners Jon Voight and Gene Hackman. Despite his success, Smith hopes that his work with Hackman in "Enemy of the State" will build his credibility.

Daring museum raid results in Napoleon gun theft

GENEVA (AP) — A hunting gun that once belonged to Napoleon was stolen from a Geneva museum in a daring overnight raid, Swiss police said Sunday. The thieves scaled the walls of the Museum of Swiss History late Saturday night and smashed the glass protecting the exhibit. The set off the building's alarm system, but managers escape without being caught. Police did not know the value of the gun.

Handwritten signature or mark at the bottom right corner of the page.